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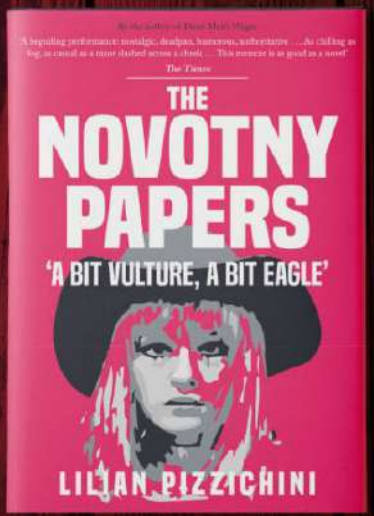

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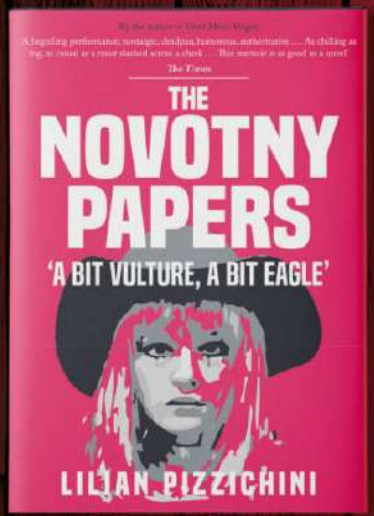
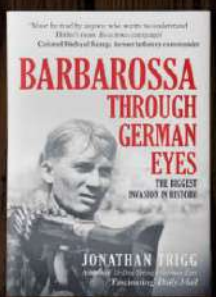
A sensational & explosive new biography on the enigmatic figure that was Mariella Novotny. The missing link between JFK and The Profumo Affair. Discover her incredible & almost unbelievable life, one that was connected to some of the great scandals of the 20th century.





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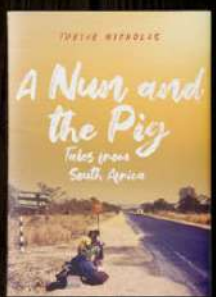

A NUN AND THE PIG

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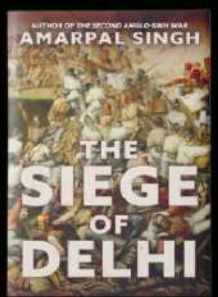

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Image source: wiki/Bibliothèque nationale de France

Isabella sailing to England accompanied by John of Beaumont

Welcome

It took a certain kind of steeliness and ruthlessness to survive and prevail as a monarch in the medieval era. Often such qualities would be celebrated in men, but for a woman to show the same resourcefulness and determination for power tended to cast her in a much darker light. Among the great medieval queens, Isabella of France is one who stands out, partially for this reason. She was born to rule and was determined to claim her birthright.

But is she the 'she-wolf' that history has tended to portray her as? Is there more to her story than betrayal and murder that has been ignored by too many for too long? That's what you'll find out in our lead feature this issue.

Also this issue we learn about Henry VIII's famous portrait artist Hans Holbein the Younger; we ask whether we can really trust Herodotus, the father of history; and we find out how exactly you should go about beating the Romans, should you ever cross paths with them. Plus, we plunge into the long history of bathing, which is a subject we've had warming up for a little while now. It's a fascinating journey that's well worth soaking up (no more bath puns).

So get digging into this new issue of *All About History* and be sure to download your free ebook and wallpapers for your devices (details on the next page). I hope you like them.

Jonathan Gordon
Editor

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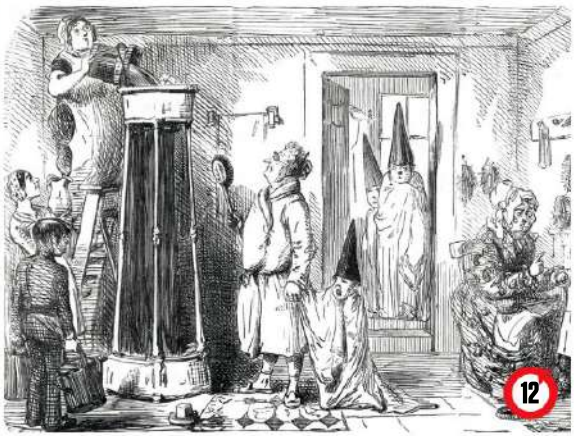

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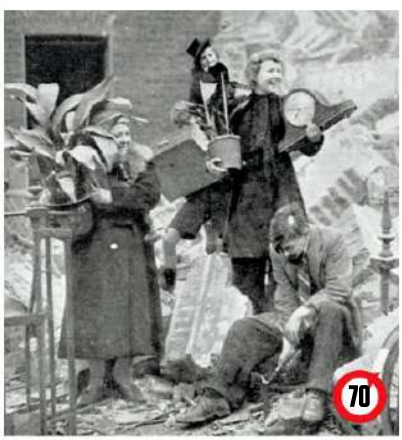

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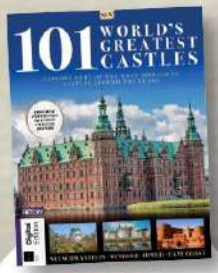

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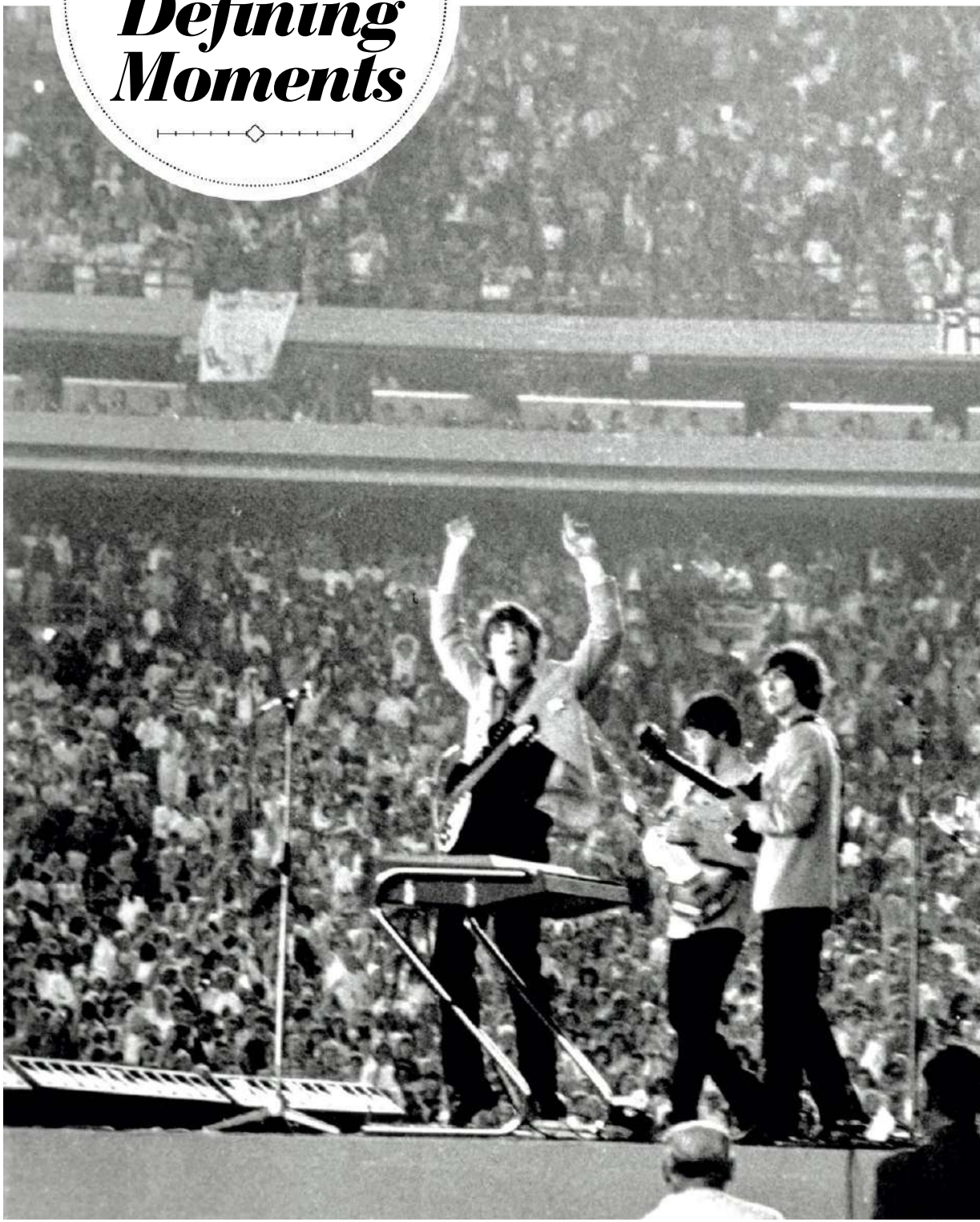


15 August 1965

BIRTH OF STADIUM ROCK

The Beatles open their second concert tour of the United States by performing to a record-breaking crowd of 55,000 people at Shea Stadium in New York City. The first major stadium concert ever held, this gig is widely considered to be a milestone in rock history.

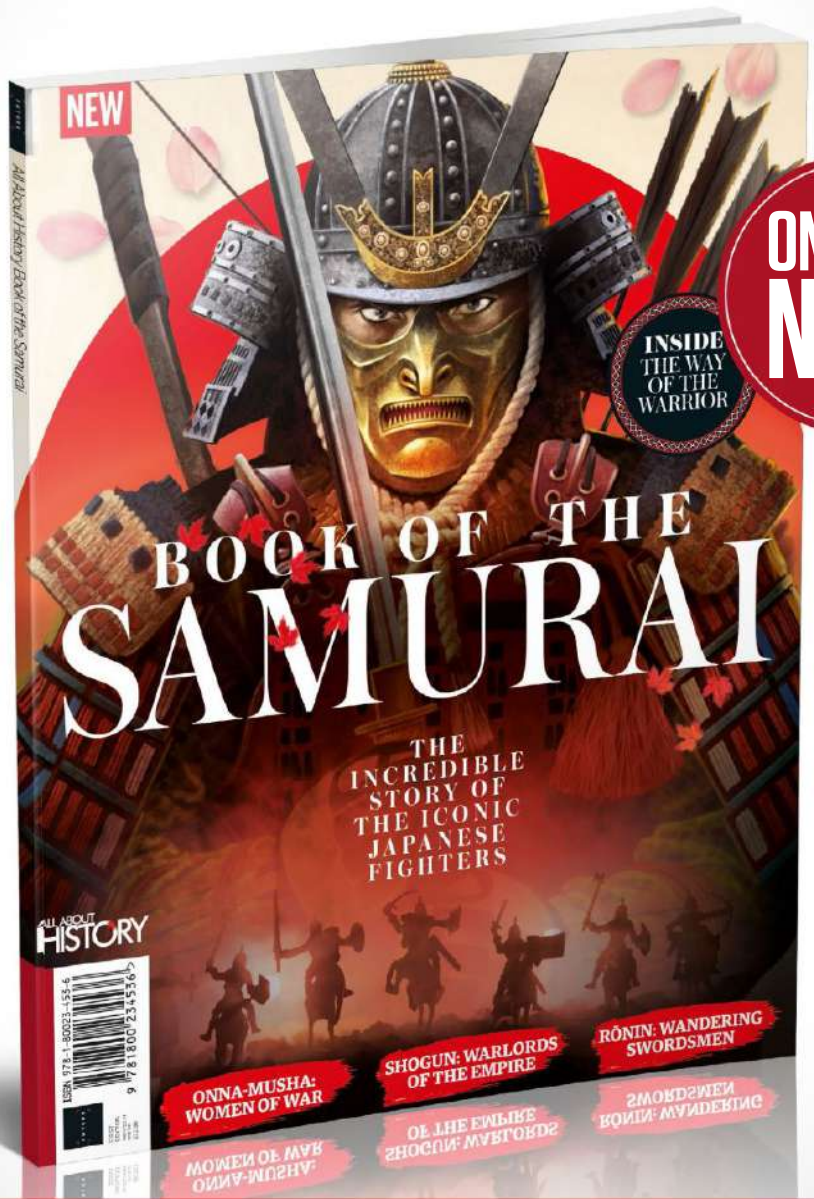
25 August 1944

LIBERATION OF PARIS

After days of fighting between the Resistance and the Germans, Paris is finally liberated by the Allies, led by the French 2nd Armoured Division and the US 4th Infantry Division. The city had been under Nazi occupation for four years, and the following day a celebratory liberation parade was held on the Champs-Élysées.

HONOUR. DISCIPLINE. INTEGRITY.

Explore the storied history of the samurai and learn what made them one of the world's most elite fighting forces. From humble beginnings, find out how this warrior class rose to become a major political power in Japan – and how, eventually, they would fall in the face of imperial reform. On the way, you'll discover their tactics, weapons, armour, and their bold etiquette of honour.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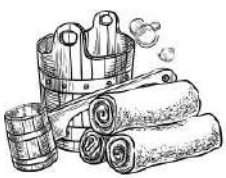

From the hot springs of Japan to the washing habits of medieval England, we take a plunge into the history of keeping clean

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MEDIEVAL HYGIENE

Main image source © Getty Images

Written by Jessica Leggett, Kate Marsh, Callum McKelvie

Key Events

3RD MILLENIUM BCE GREAT BATH OF MOHENJO-DARO

The earliest known public baths in the world, the Great Bath is in modern-day Pakistan. Belonging to the Indus civilisation, it's part of the archaeological evidence that suggests an emphasis on cleanliness and sanitation. Most homes that have been uncovered also have their own washrooms.

© Getty Images

© Alamy

THE FIRST SOAP
2800 BCE

The oldest soap we know about comes from Mesopotamia. Originally used by priests to purify themselves, they are later possibly used to treat skin diseases.

RISE OF SENTO
6th century CE

Public baths, known as sento, are built in Japan. They later find wide popularity in the Edo period (1603-1868). Bathing culture is still important in Japan today.

ICELAND'S SPRINGS
13th CENTURY

The first record of public bathing in Iceland mentions Snorralaug (Snorri's Pool) in the *Landnámabók* and *Sturlunga* saga. These pools become commonplace in the 20th century.

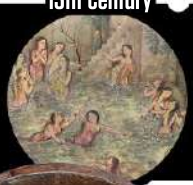
3RD MILLENIUM BCE — 2181 BCE — 2ND CENTURY BCE — 6th century CE — 13th century — 15TH CENTURY

ZHOU DYNASTY BATHING CULTURE
1046 BCE

In Zhou Dynasty China, government officials must wash their hair every three days and take a bath every five days. They also use two towels: one for the upper part of the body and one for the lower.

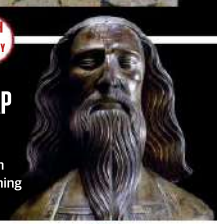
IMPORTANCE IN THE EAST
1056

Hilal al-Sabi' estimates that Baghdad is home to 60,000 bathhouses. While possibly an exaggeration, it shows their importance in the region.



ROYAL HOT WATER TAP
1327-77

Edward III of England builds a bath house at Westminster with running hot and cold water coming from two large bronze taps.



2181 BCE BATHE LIKE AN EGYPTIAN

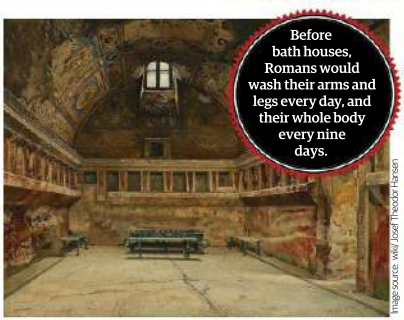
In Ancient Egypt, no matter the class, people bathe as soon as they wake up. Every household has a basin and jug for washing hands and showering, and they were also used before and after meals.

The Egyptian *Book of the Dead* states that no one can speak to people in the afterlife if they are not physically clean and presentable.

Image source: Met Museum

2ND CENTURY BCE ROMAN BATHS

The first Roman baths are constructed in the 2nd century BCE. Supplied by aqueducts, more bath houses crop up around Europe, nearing 1,000 by the 5th century CE. They become a place to socialise as well as wash, and become an important part of Roman culture.



Before bath houses, Romans would wash their arms and legs every day, and their whole body every nine days.

Image source: wiv/Josef Theodor Hansen

19TH CENTURY BATHING MACHINES

Sea bathing had long been a recommended 'cure' for many ailments, and in the Victorian era seaside visits boomed. However, the idea of seeing a woman in anything less than full attire was considered too scandalous and so wheeled carts, called bathing machines, allowed for private changing and entrance to the water.

Queen Victoria had her own bathing machine and a 'dipper', a woman who assisted in entering and exiting the water.

CLOSED IN ENGLAND
1546

Henry VIII closes bath houses in England due to rising cases of syphilis – they often doubled as brothels.

ORDER OF THE BATH
1725

George I founds the Order of the Bath, named after the medieval ritual bath that precedes knighthood ceremonies to symbolise spiritual purification.

HEADING INDOORS
C.1850

Indoor plumbing changes the game: free-standing showers can now be connected to a running water supply. As a result, the popularity of showers in wealthy homes grows.

GOING ELECTRIC
1960s

The first electric showers come onto the market, which triggers the evolution of the water tank. Hot water can now be instantly supplied to bathrooms.

© Alamy, © Getty Images, wiki/Ordnance © Alamy

1546 — 1702 — C.1850 — 19TH CENTURY — 1942

COLD BATHING
1702

Sir John Floyer publishes a book on the remedial use of spring water by peasants. Six editions are published in the space of just a few years.

THE FIRST SHOWER 1767

Englishman William Feetham invents the first modern shower. Water is pumped into a basin above the user's head and then released by pulling a chain.

MORE AVAILABLE 1900

The first working class homes with bathrooms are built. Council houses follow in the 1920s, but it's still a luxury – most homes don't follow suit until the late 1960s.

Image source: Met Museum, wiki/Montmorency, wiki/Welcome Images © Alamy

15TH CENTURY BATHING WITH THE AZTECS

The Baths of Moctezuma are built during his reign in modern-day Chapultepec, Mexico. They aren't the only ones – baths were everywhere and Moctezuma is recorded to have bathed several times a day. The Spanish report the Aztecs to be very clean people.

Image source: wiki/Isanmoz74

1942 SAVING WATER

As part of rationing during World War II, British households are limited to five-inch-deep baths. People are encouraged to draw a line in their tub at five inches, and George VI orders the baths in Buckingham Palace to be marked in this way.

© Alamy

AN ONSEN

Japan
6th century CE – Present

Onsens were, at one time, a key part of the Japanese lifestyle. These public baths were more than a place to clean yourself. Before the 19th century, when people didn't have baths in their homes, onsens were a social hotspot. People would go and meet for conversation, as well as to use the leisure facilities provided along with the baths.

Onsens grew in popularity after the arrival of Buddhism in Japan, as the religion taught that bathing prevented disease, so as Buddhism expanded across the country, so did public bathing. Prior to the Meiji Restoration and the arrival of Western culture in Japan, it was the norm for men and women to bathe together. It is still possible to find onsens that offer mixed bathing today, but these are rare. If you're wanting to share the experience with someone from another gender, then you will need to find a private onsen.

Fed by natural hot springs, onsens are still common and popular with locals and tourists alike, but admittedly not to the degree that they were in decades prior. Some social aspects of the onsen remain, so it's not uncommon to hear lively conversations as you sit and soak. There are numerous rules and etiquette protocols to follow, such as keeping your head above the water at all times, and no towels allowed in the water. Don't worry, as these are often signposted.

Many onsens will turn away customers with tattoos, as body art is commonly associated with the yakuza, Japan's organised crime syndicates. But as the number of Western tourists in Japan has increased over recent years, more onsens are lifting their ban on tattoos. However, many do stick rigidly to the old rules. You can always go in and ask the staff if they are a problem; some may allow guests in if the tattoo is covered with a plaster. You don't want to find yourself in hot water – or perhaps you do.

CHANGING ROOM
Japanese baths are enjoyed naked, so leave your clothes, any swimming suits and all belongings in the provided locker or basket. You can take a hand towel with you to the bathing area, but remember to keep it out of the water. You can also take some toiletries with you through to the showering area.

SHOWERS
Baths in Japan aren't for washing oneself; they are mainly for relaxation. Because of this, people will wash themselves before bathing, even at home. This is so you don't bring any dirt into the bath water that people will then soak in. The showers are kept at waist height, as it is considered bad etiquette to stand up while showering because you're more likely to splash those nearby. Make sure you rinse any soap or shampoo off so that it's not brought into the water.

DECOR
Every aspect of the onsen is meant to make the guest feel like they are immersed in a natural environment and as relaxed as possible, and some even have gardens inside the building. The style of decor depends on where the onsen is located. For example, these are typically dry gardens in cities, but there can also be a water feature (such as a koi fishpond).

THE BATH
Some facilities have multiple baths at varying temperatures – some hot, and others cold. Switching between baths is common, but guests should rinse themselves off when going from one bath to another. The etiquette is to enter the water as calmly as possible so you don't disturb anyone else. Also, only get into the water up to your neck – don't dip your head in.

GENDERED SECTIONS
While there are a handful of mixed-gender onsens in Japan, the majority separate the men's and women's bathing areas. These are clearly signed, often in both English and Japanese, but if you've found yourself at an onsen away from a major city, you'll likely not find any English signs. If you can't read Japanese, the entrances will have colour-coded curtains: red for women and blue for men.

THE FRONT DESK

Depending on the onsen, you may have to remove your shoes before approaching the desk. Some onsens will have a desk attended by a member of staff, while others may have a simple ticket machine. Pay for entry, or exchange your ticket, and you will be given a locker key. You can also rent towels from here.

KEEPING IT COOL

After a bath, guests will relax in a chair with a cold cup of water for about half an hour to cool down. There will be a cold water dispenser and paper cups that you can help yourself to in the changing room. The nearby bin will only be used for the paper cups, so do not throw away any other waste you have in this bin.

STOOL AND WASHBOWL

Along with toiletries will be your stool and a washbowl, often stacked on top of the shower head or just to the side. Use the taps by the shower to run hot water into the washbowl. Remain seated on the stool while you wash yourself. Guests should rinse the stool once they have finished.

BATHSIDE WASHBUCKETS

Before entering the bath, guests are encouraged to use the washbuckets found at the side of the baths. Pick up water from the bath and slowly pour it over your body, working from feet all the way up to the shoulders. This is to acclimate the body to the temperature of the bath's water.

SCENERY

Onsen can offer spectacular views of some of the most scenic parts of Japan. Soaking in the water while taking in the natural environment is a key part of the bathing experience. There are many onsens around the lakes that surround Mt Fuji, for example.

Illustration by Adam Mann

Anatomy

NEEDLE SHOWER

Britain
19th – 20th century

EXPENSIVE TECHNOLOGY

Needle showers were large, far from cheap and, of course, required indoor plumbing. As a result they were usually only found in gentlemen's athletic clubs or wealthy private residences. They were also installed in spas such as the Spa Treatment Centre in Bath.

THERAPEUTIC TREATMENT

Today, we use the modern shower for maintaining personal hygiene. However, in Victorian and Edwardian Britain the needle shower was used for healing and medicinal purposes. The jets of water were supposed to massage the internal organs such as the kidneys and liver, as well as the spine.

USE WITH CAUTION

It was believed by the Victorians and Edwardians that showers and their energising effects were harmful to women. In fact, up until the 1930s a woman was advised to speak to her doctor first if she wanted to take a shower. Consequently, showers were primarily used by men.

USER CONTROL

The water-flow and pressure of needle showers were controlled with a range of valves and taps. A mixing chamber was used to regulate the temperature of the water.

INNOVATIVE DESIGN

Needle showers consisted of curved horizontal pipes designed to surround the body. These pipes had numerous small holes that produced needle-like jets of water, deliberately arranged to hit the body from multiple angles. The units often had an overhead shower as well.

INVIGORATING EXPERIENCE

The Victorians and Edwardians believed that needle showers promoted good health and that the jets of water could stimulate the skin. Generally, cold or lukewarm water was the preferred temperature for a refreshing shower.

RARE FIND

Also known as cage showers, needle showers were commonly made from brass that was sometimes plated in nickel. Brass was expensive and the showers were frequently ripped out for scrap when the owners moved home, so there are few original examples surviving today.

Illustration by Kevin McGivern

Historical Treasures

THE HEAD OF SULIS MINERVA

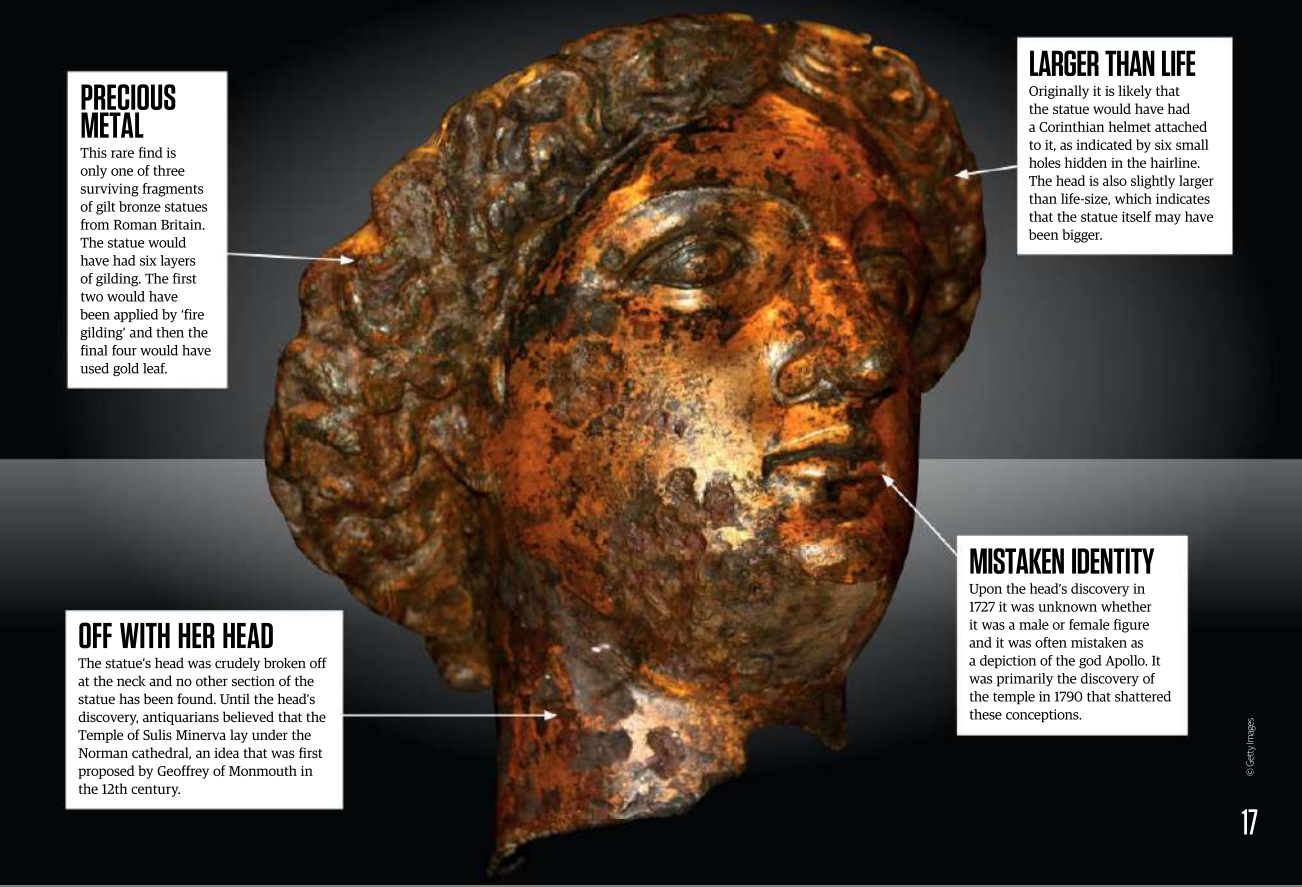
This statue of the goddess sheds new light on Roman Britain Bath, 60-70 CE

On 12 July 1727, a group of workmen were digging deep beneath the main street of Bath, constructing a new sewer for the ancient city. It was as they went about this work that they suddenly uncovered a large bronze head, a representation of the goddess Sulis Minerva. Decades later, in the 1790s (during digging of the foundations for the now-famous Pump Room) a large amount of Roman sculptured stone was uncovered, evidence of a temple built by the worshippers of the goddess.

Sulis Minerva was a combination of the Celtic goddess Sulis (who had always been spiritually connected to the springs) and the Roman Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, medicine, commerce, handicrafts, poetry and the arts. In particular, historians believe that she was primarily worshipped as the goddess of healing, hence her connection to the springs, which were renowned for their healing properties. During the Roman occupation, a vast temple to Sulis Minerva was located around the principal spring, alongside a huge bathing complex and a forum.

The head is thought to be from a statue that was located within the Temple of Sulis Minerva. Above the temple was a stone frieze depicting a Gorgon (which has also been discovered) that would have looked down upon all those who entered. Visitors would then enter through a large door to the cella, a large chamber where the image of the deity would have been housed. The statue would have most likely been placed so Sulis Minerva could look across the courtyard to the great altar where sacrifices would have been made in her honour. The room would have been unlit and without any windows. However a large altar fire would have burnt before her, giving the bronze an eerie glow.

It is believed that the statue of the goddess may have been at the temple site from the time of its foundation, meaning that by the time it was destroyed it would have been around three centuries old.



PRECIOUS METAL

This rare find is only one of three surviving fragments of gilt bronze statues from Roman Britain. The statue would have had six layers of gilding. The first two would have been applied by 'fire gilding' and then the final four would have used gold leaf.

LARGER THAN LIFE

Originally it is likely that the statue would have had a Corinthian helmet attached to it, as indicated by six small holes hidden in the hairline. The head is also slightly larger than life-size, which indicates that the statue itself may have been bigger.

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Upon the head's discovery in 1727 it was unknown whether it was a male or female figure and it was often mistaken as a depiction of the god Apollo. It was primarily the discovery of the temple in 1790 that shattered these conceptions.

OFF WITH HER HEAD

The statue's head was crudely broken off at the neck and no other section of the statue has been found. Until the head's discovery, antiquarians believed that the Temple of Sulis Minerva lay under the Norman cathedral, an idea that was first proposed by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the 12th century.

© Getty Images

BIGWIGS OF BATHING

From mythical bathhouse spirits to famous bathers and those who changed bathing forever

Vincenz Priessnitz
Austrian, 1799-1851

Often considered the founder of modern hydrotherapy, Priessnitz is credited with creating the 'wet compress'. When this idea failed to work, he introduced the notion of partial baths. Although he himself was almost illiterate, his work was documented by other doctors, who took his research and utilised it to further develop his methods. He conducted his work in Graefenberg, half-way up a mountain, where he was particularly talented at treating patients suffering from mercury poisoning.

Sx © Alamy

Priessnitz first encountered hydrotherapy at the age of 13 when he sprained his wrist and instinctively put it under a tap, noting how the water cooled the pain

MONTEZUMA
AZTEC, 1466-1520

The last Aztec emperor, who witnessed their downfall at the hands of Hernan Cortes, was also known for his bathing habits. The Aztecs were known to be exceptionally clean, and Montezuma is said to have bathed numerous times in a single day, even reputedly holding court while he did so, much to the bemusement of the Spanish. The Baths of Montezuma, though extensively remodelled and rebuilt throughout the centuries, can still be visited today.

DAVID URQUHART BRITISH, 1805-1877

A politician and First Secretary at the British Embassy in Istanbul, David Urquhart was also an accomplished traveller and author who wrote extensively on his journeys. Some of his works that proved particularly popular were those discussing Turkish baths and their potential health benefits. As a result, Urquhart sought to introduce similar baths to Britain, and by the time the Jermyn Street Hammam baths were opened on 26 July 1862, there were already roughly 30-35 baths in London. Urquhart believed that their health benefits would, "wage war against drunkenness, immorality and filth in every shape." Although there may have been Turkish baths in London before, Urquhart is widely regarded as the pioneer behind their widespread introduction.

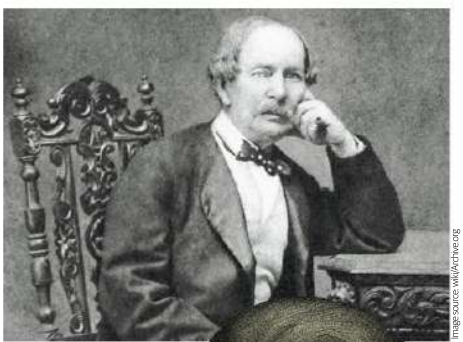


Image source: wiki/Archive.org

James Currie
Scottish, 1756-1805

Dr James Currie was a pioneer in hydrotherapy, something he was inspired to experiment with after reading Dr William Wright's account of sailors whose fevers were treated with sea water affusions. So successful were Currie's experiments that he quickly began to only record events where his experiments failed. In 1801, he was able to cure both his sons of serious cases of scarlatina through hydrotherapy by pouring warm water on them up to 14 times a day.

As well as being a prominent physician, James Currie was the first individual to write a biography of the poet Robert Burns

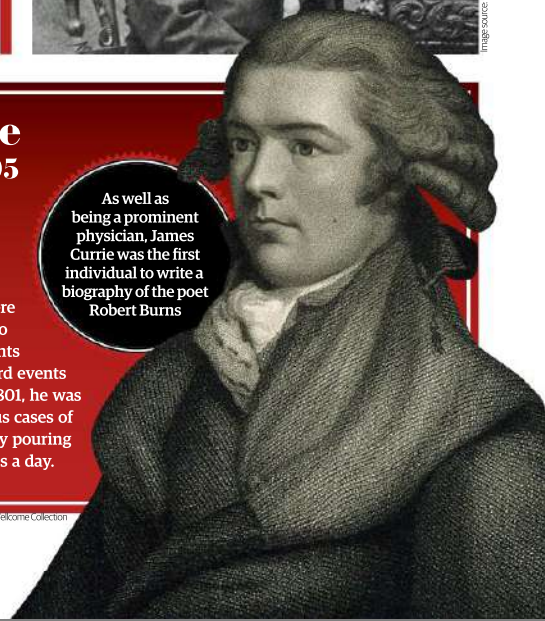


Image source: wiki/Wellcome Collection

The Bannik was known to steal children who were born in the bath house, spy on women, and suffocate people in the steam if displeased

Bannik Slavic

A mythical bathing spirit from Slavic mythology, the Bannik is a spirit of the bathhouse, usually depicted as a small, elderly man with a tiny body and large head, with long white hair and a beard. Although the appearance of these creatures might at first be somewhat frightening, they are easily sedated with offerings of soap and water. The Bannik also has the power to tell an individual's fortune. A person would turn their back to the creature, and if their future was bright, they would feel a soft touch. However, should it be bad, the Bannik's claws would rake down their back.

BENEDICT OF NURSIA
ITALIAN, 480-547 CE

Benedict of Nursia founded his first monastery at Monte Cassino in 529 CE. He encouraged the use of therapeutic bathing, and his Benedictine order would be instrumental in the founding of numerous spas, including the one at Bad Ragaz in northeastern Switzerland in 740 CE. Members of religious groups could obtain permission to visit the spas, and they were mainly used for religious purposes or to heal the sick. However, for some Benedictine monks (particularly those in Britain) bathing was discouraged, and some only took three or four a year.

KITTY WILKINSON
BRITISH, 1786-1860

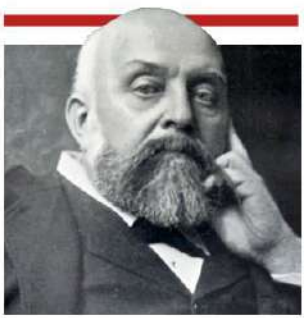
Nicknamed the 'saint of the slums', Kitty Wilkinson is something of a Liverpool legend. Raised in extreme poverty, she spent much of her life caring for the needy, one of who gifted her a mangle – a machine used to wring water from wet laundry. During the 1832 Cholera epidemic, this machine was used to save many lives, as Kitty encouraged people to use her machine to clean their sheets, and showed them the importance of cleanliness. In 1842, due to her efforts, the first public baths and wash house was opened, and Kitty was named their superintendent.

NAPOLEON FRENCH, 1769-1821

Another historical celebrity who was supposedly fond of a bath was French Emperor Napoleon. He would reportedly take extensiver soaks in extremely hot water, during which he would read the newspaper. Particularly during his exile in St Helena, he would spend hours in a small tin bath where he would read, write and even eat meals.

Pope Gregory (Gregorius) I
Italian, c.504-604 CE

Remembered as a strong Pope who extended the Catholic Church's missionary activities, and for his extensive writings on spirituality, Pope Gregory was also a strong believer in bathing as a means through which to heal the sick. However, his opinions on this matter were somewhat strict, as he stated, "baths are for the needs of the body... not for the titillation of the mind and sensuous pleasure."



ANDREW PEARS
BRITISH, C.1770-1845

The inventor of transparent soap and the founder of the Pears brand, Andrew Pears sought to create a product that would be gentler than the others on the market at the time, and also lack dangerous ingredients like arsenic or lead. By the early 1790s, he was running a cream and powder shop in London's fashionable Soho area. The purity of Pears Soap was a factor helped in its marketing by the fact that his resultant experiments with Glycerine produced a clear and transparent product. He perfumed his product with garden flowers, giving a pleasant aroma.

Q&A

MEDIEVAL HYGIENE

Dr Katherine Harvey reveals whether medieval people were really as dirty and smelly as we assume

It is usually presumed that medieval people were dirty and that they did not practise good personal hygiene. Is this true?

Definitely not! There is actually a surprising amount of evidence to show that medieval people not only washed but that they actively enjoyed doing so, and that they strongly disliked being dirty. Like us, they considered cleanliness to be good manners and they were well aware of the health risks posed by dirt. And so, even though practising good personal hygiene in a world without all our modern conveniences could be difficult and sometimes dangerous, most people washed often and did their very best to keep themselves, their clothes and their surroundings clean.

What was the medical advice surrounding hygiene during the medieval period?

Hygiene played a really important role in medieval medicine: physicians thought that regular washing was an important form of preventative medicine because it removed both visible dirt and invisible excretions (including sweat). If these were not washed off, they could cause all sorts of nasty problems, including skin conditions and parasitic infections. People were encouraged to wash their hands, face, mouth and head every morning when they got up, and to wash their hands throughout the day, especially before and after eating. Contrary to popular belief, medieval doctors were enthusiastic about bathing, both as a way to keep clean and as a way to treat illness. There were some concerns about excessive bathing, especially during epidemics (it was believed that heating the body opened the skin's pores to disease, and of course infection spread easily in crowded bathhouses). But, generally speaking, washing was very much seen as a good thing.

Did medieval people use luxurious or scented products to wash their bodies and hair?

Some of the ingredients used were a bit grim. The basic soap, for example, was made of wood ash and fat. Clothes were often washed with stale urine, which is actually a natural source of ammonia, so that is not as bad an idea as it sounds! But nice smells were strongly associated with cleanliness and good health, so many people would have added sweet-smelling herbs to their water; those who could afford it used expensive scented soaps and oils. Hair was washed with herbs mixed into the water, or with powders made of fragrant ingredients such as rose petals. And teeth were often cleaned with powders made of herbs such as mint, which of course we still use in toothpaste today.

Did anyone living in medieval society willingly adopt poor personal hygiene?

Yes, a few people. Some medieval Christians worried that taking good care of the body was a sign of vanity, especially if it was done to attract the opposite sex. The Italian mystic Catherine of Siena often wept when she recalled how, as a teenager, she had washed her face and brushed her hair in the hope of finding a husband. Poor personal hygiene, on the other hand, could be linked to piety, so some saints actively embraced filth. After Thomas Becket was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral, the monks who prepared his body for burial discovered that his hair underclothes were swarming with lice and fleas. They interpreted this as further proof of his sanctity, almost another form of martyrdom. But poor personal hygiene was never actually required of the clergy. In fact, they were early adopters of running water, washing and toilet facilities. Such behaviour was powerful because it was unusual, and most people would have been just as repulsed by parasites as we are!

Dr Katherine Harvey is a medieval historian based at Birkbeck, University of London. She has published widely on medieval topics including sexuality, gender, emotions and the body, and is the author of *Episcopal Appointments in England, c.1214 – 1344* (Ashgate, 2014).

Image source: wiki Wellcome Collection

Headshot source: Dr Katherine Harvey

Was washing equipment, such as bathtubs and basins, available to all levels of society?

The best facilities, such as the bath-chamber with hot and cold running water which Edward III had in his palace at Westminster, was only available to the very richest people. But almost everyone had some washing equipment. Many people owed a wooden bathtub; these were often lined with cloth to prevent splinters, and were filled with water heated over the fire. We know from post-mortem inventories that even peasants usually owned basins and ewers for washing. Town-dwellers could also go to the public baths (there were more than 30 such establishments in early 13th century Paris), and we know that many people washed in rivers, lakes and ponds. Sadly, our best source of evidence for such outdoor washing are coroners' records, which include numerous cases in which people drowned while bathing.

> "Most people washed often and did their very best to keep clean"

How did medieval people wash their clothes? And did they do their laundry often?

Some women (and it almost always was women) used a tub in which they would trample their linen or beat it with a wooden bat until it was clean. Others did their washing in rivers and streams - larger rivers often had special jetties to facilitate this. Washing was dried outside, preferably on bushes or on freshly cut grass to make it smell nice. Most people washed quite often, and records from wealthier households suggest that at least some people changed their underclothes (usually a linen shift) every day. Hospital regulations usually stated that the patients' linen must be washed at least once a week, and more often if necessary. Monks and nuns were prone to complain if their laundry wasn't done at least once a fortnight. But for the very poorest members of society, who owned only a single set of clothes, doing the laundry may have been a rare treat.

THE FIRES OF LUST: SEX IN THE MIDDLE AGES
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LEFT A small boy having his head cleaned of lice

RIGHT The best washing facilities were only available to the richest in society

© Getty Images

ANCIENT BATHHOUSES

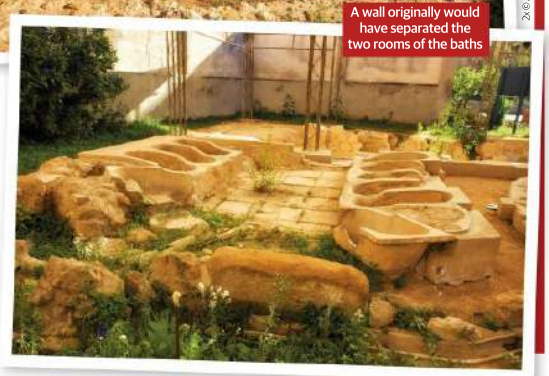
Find out where civilisations past cleaned off the dirt after a long, hard day

1 GREEK BATHS OF GELA
CALTANISSETTA, ITALY

While it may seem odd to some to visit Ancient Greek baths in Sicily, the Greeks lived on the island for quite a while, and they certainly left their mark. The Greek baths at Gela – allegedly the second-oldest town in Sicily after Syracuse – are one of the oldest baths in all of Italy, dating back to the 4th century BCE. At the baths, you'll find 36 tanks and underground drainage systems, all rediscovered in 1957.

They're the only extant Greek baths in Sicily, and are located just 500 metres from the city walls on Via Europea – perfectly located for visitors to the town. The site itself is comparable with ones that can be found in Delphi, Olympia and further afield, but was destroyed in 282 BCE after ancient Gela was looted by Campanian mercenaries. As far as archaeologists can tell, it wasn't reused at all until being rediscovered in the 20th century.

9am-2pm, 3-8pm



A wall originally would have separated the two rooms of the baths

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2 HAMMAM OF SULTAN INAL
CAIRO, EGYPT

In the streets of the historic centre of Cairo, near the Madrasa of al-Kamil Ayyub, is a hammam – or bathhouse – that once belonged to a sultan. Commissioned during the Mamluk period by Sultan Inal, it was built in 1456, and is the only extant part of a complex that once included a commercial centre, a fountain, and hammams for both men and women.

While Cairo has been home to many hammams over the centuries, this is one of the few well-preserved ones left in the city centre, and it's now open as a historic monument after the completion of a lengthy restoration project.

Sultan Inal has been remembered for becoming sultan of Egypt in 1451 and ushering in an era of stability and prosperity – something that his building projects would have helped with. He died ten years after coming to the throne.

The hot room at the hammam of Sultan Inal

Image source: wiki/ Jorge Láscar

9am-4.30pm
Price: Sharia Al Muizz Li Din Allah multisite ticket adult/student LE100/50

Kodakara-yu's exterior is reminiscent of a temple

The columns in the Caliphal Baths are as ornate as you would expect

3 BATHS AT EDO-TOKYO OPEN AIR ARCHITECTURAL MUSEUM
TOKYO, JAPAN

If you want to immerse yourself in the atmosphere of a traditional Japanese bathhouse, head to the Edo-Tokyo Open-Air Architectural Museum in Japan. Kodakara-yu, the bathhouse at the museum, was built in 1929 in Adachi ward, and was used until 1988. It was then moved to the museum as a near-perfect example of a typical Tokyo-style bathhouse, where it has inspired cinema greats like Hayao Miyazaki of Studio Ghibli – the bathhouse in the film *Spirited Away* is strongly based on Kodakara-yu.

With a temple-style outward appearance, complete with carvings of the seven gods of good luck above the entrance, inside has painted tiles, a large mural of nearby Mount Fuji, and lattice-ceilinged dressing rooms, with a garden outside. Visitors can see what this traditional Japanese bathhouse looks like, and see it among the architecture of a Japanese town. You'll also be able to see a traditional bar, Japanese mansions, shops and much more.

The museum usually isn't too crowded, but it can be during cherry blossom season – although it's still well worth a visit to see the pink blossoms next to the Edo architecture.

Admission: 400 yen
Open 9.30am - 5.30pm (or 4.30pm October-March). Closed Mondays (or the following day if Monday is a national holiday)

4 ROMAN BATHS AT POMPEII
POMPEII, ITALY

Ancient Rome is known for its baths, or thermae. It stands to reason, then, that pre-buried Pompeii had a few thermae dotted around the place. The oldest in the town were the Stabian Baths, and they measured in at more than 3,500 square metres. Split into two sections for men and women – standard practice for Roman thermae – it also boasted an open exercise space, or palaestra.

For a more complete experience of what being in a thermae would have been like, head to the Forum Baths. Also divided into gendered sections with their own independent entrances, the rooms are pretty much intact, and the walls are still decorated. With frescoes of garden scenes and vault ceilings with stucco friezes, you can see what a Roman citizen (or slave) would have seen before 79 CE.

The Forum Baths in ancient Pompeii, dated mid to late 1st century BCE

© Getty Images

Both baths are great representations of thermae, complete with the different rooms. You can go through the ancient door into the apodyterium, or changing room, before making your way to the frigidarium, or cold bath room. Next comes the tepidarium, followed by the caldarium, the heat increasing as you go.

Open 9am-7pm
Tickets €16

5 CALIPHAL BATHS
CÓRDOBA, SPAIN

Dug up several times, the importance of the Caliphal Baths in Córdoba, Spain, was finally recognised in the early 1960s. Spanish archaeologists uncovered the true extent of the hammam to see just how impressive it was.

Dating back to the 10th century, the baths were commissioned by al-Hakam II. Now located in the square of Campo Santo de los Mártires, in its infancy its home was the Caliphal Alcázar, and it was used as a harem by the Caliph. Washing and personal hygiene played a fundamental part in 10th-century Muslim life, which explains why the caliphal complex also had a mosque, as well as the Caliph's residence, giving him easy access to the facilities.

Inside was stunning. The walls were built from stone blocks, and had vaulted ceilings with star-shaped openings. Semi-circular arches were accompanied by marble pillars and capitals, but it wasn't to last.

It was in 1328 that the Caliphal Baths were buried. The Christian king Alfonso XI commissioned a new bath and parade square.

It has been hard to turn it into a tourist attraction and museum, but it opened to the public in October 2006. A series of eight halls tell the story of the Caliphal Baths, and puts the importance of the building and ritual in context.

From 16th September to 15th June. Tuesdays to Saturdays: 8:30 to 19:30 / Sundays and Bank Holidays: 9:30 to 14:30. Mondays closed. From 16th June to 15th September. Tuesdays to Saturdays: 08:30 - 15:00 / Sundays and Bank Holidays: 08:30 - 14:30. Mondays closed. Adults: 3€. Students: 1,5€.

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ISABELLA

Did the French queen really usurp Edward II to claim England as her own?

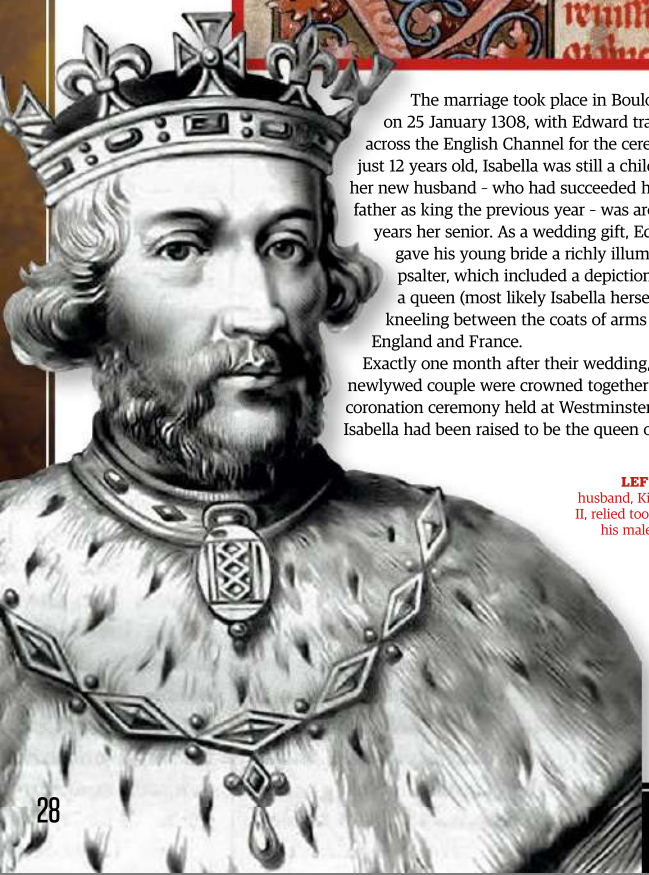
Written by Jessica Leggett

One of the most notorious figures in English history, Isabella of France has been described as a 'shadow queen', a 'rebel queen' and the 'She-Wolf of France'. The only queen to have rebelled against her husband, Isabella lived in a time when female power was viewed as a threat – and she was willing to do whatever it took to fight for what was rightfully hers.

Isabella was born in Paris around 1295, the daughter of King Philip IV of France and Queen Joan I of Navarre. Like all royal princesses, she was a political pawn raised with the expectation that her marriage would secure a foreign alliance. In 1299, when Isabella was three or four, it was decided she would marry Edward of Caernarfon, King Edward I of England's heir. The betrothal was part of the Treaty of Montreuil, a peace agreement between the two countries. ▶

Illustration by Joe Cummings

RIGHT A young Isabella with her father Philip, her brothers and her uncle



LEFT Isabella's husband, King Edward II, relied too heavily on his male favourites

The marriage took place in Boulogne on 25 January 1308, with Edward travelling across the English Channel for the ceremony. At just 12 years old, Isabella was still a child while her new husband – who had succeeded his late father as king the previous year – was around 11 years her senior. As a wedding gift, Edward gave his young bride a richly illuminated psalter, which included a depiction of a queen (most likely Isabella herself) kneeling between the coats of arms of England and France.

Exactly one month after their wedding, the newlywed couple were crowned together in a joint coronation ceremony held at Westminster Abbey. Isabella had been raised to be the queen of England

"EDWARD'S TREATMENT OF ISABELLA AT THE CORONATION, JUST ONE MONTH INTO THEIR REIGN, WAS AN INAUSPICIOUS START"

and the coronation should have been a joyous occasion. Yet there was one person whose presence likely soured this moment for the new queen. His name? Piers Gaveston, 1st Earl of Cornwall.

Gaveston, who had joined Edward's household while the latter was still a prince, was the king's favourite and their close relationship had sparked rumours that they were lovers.

At the coronation, it was Gaveston who carried the king's crown into the Abbey, reflecting his importance to Edward and his influence on the king. To make matters worse, at the coronation feast the king apparently showed more interest in spending time with his favourite than with his new queen.

Although Isabella was young, she was highly intelligent and she would have known exactly what was expected of her: to be a dutiful wife, a loyal queen and, one day, mother to a future king. But she would have also known how she should have been treated as a queen. Her treatment at the coronation, just one month into their reign, was an inauspicious start.

With Gaveston's presence and, indeed, Edward's penchant for male favourites, it is commonly assumed that Isabella endured an unhappy marriage with the king from the very beginning. However, the fact that they ultimately had four

children together – Edward, John, Eleanor and Joan – suggests that this assumption is untrue.

Edward also famously saved his wife while they were paying a visit to France in 1313. During their stay, a fire broke out in their tent and Edward carried Isabella, both of them completely naked, to safety. Edward's heroic actions that night were deemed by contemporaries as an act of love.

Playing the supportive wife and queen, Isabella tolerated Gaveston and they managed to co-exist with one another. Nevertheless, Edward's relationship with Gaveston still caused issues with the English barons. These barons, led by Edward's cousin Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, opposed Gaveston's influence and power, especially because it greatly diminished their own. The situation had already been strained when Isabella first arrived in England, but the simmering tensions finally boiled over in 1311 after Edward led a failed military campaign against Scotland.

That October, 21 barons drafted the Ordinances, a series of regulations that not only restricted Edward's power but demanded that Gaveston be banished. The king accepted these demands and sent Gaveston into exile, only to have him return shortly afterwards. Infuriated, Lancaster and the barons decided to deal with Gaveston themselves once and for all.

Edward, wanting to protect his favourite, fled north with Gaveston and Isabella as the barons gave chase – at this point, the queen was pregnant. The three of them ended up being separated, with Edward and Isabella heading to York while Gaveston was in Scarborough, where he was captured by the barons. Found guilty of being a traitor, Gaveston was executed on 19 June under the orders of Lancaster. Five months later, Isabella gave birth to her first child and son, Edward, at Windsor Castle.

The death of Gaveston gave Isabella the chance to enter the political arena, as she encouraged peace between her husband

BELOW A miniature of Isabella and Edward's wedding in France

FORMIDABLE ROYALS

Isabella was not the only medieval queen to fight for her rights

Empress Matilda
1102-67

A claimant to the English throne during the Anarchy, a civil war between England and Normandy, Empress Matilda almost became England's first female ruler. She was the daughter and heir of King Henry I, but after his death the throne was seized by her cousin Stephen of Blois. Although Matilda defeated Stephen at the Battle of Lincoln in 1141, she was driven out of London before her coronation could be held. In 1153, she signed the Treaty of Winchester, which agreed that Stephen could remain king as long as Matilda's son, Henry, was named his heir.

Eleanor of Aquitaine
c.1122 – 1204

Eleanor was queen of France through her marriage to King Louis VII. After that marriage was annulled, she became queen of England after marrying King Henry II, with whom she had eight children. The couple eventually became estranged and Eleanor supported her sons Henry, Richard and Geoffrey when they plotted to overthrow their father. The revolt failed and the king imprisoned Eleanor for almost 16 years until she was released by Richard after he ascended the throne. When he left for the Third Crusade Eleanor was chosen to act as regent and govern the country on his behalf.

Margaret of Anjou
1430-82

Margaret was the queen of England as the wife of King Henry VI. She was a leader of the Lancastrian faction in the Wars of the Roses, which was partly triggered by the power vacuum caused by Henry's frequent bouts of mental instability. Fiercely protective of her son, Edward of Westminster, and his right to the English throne, she forged alliances to try and defeat the Yorkist faction. She was defeated and captured at the Battle of Tewkesbury, during which her son was killed. Her cousin, the French King Louis XI, paid a ransom for her and she spent the rest of her life in France.

GK © Aditya

and the barons to avoid a civil war. However, Gaveston's death did little to bridge the growing divide between the barons and their king. Devastated over the loss of his favourite, Edward vowed to get revenge on those responsible. Isabella and Edward's aforementioned visit to France in 1313 had been made in the hope of securing the support of the queen's French relatives against the English barons.

Despite this, Edward found himself stuck after he suffered a humiliating defeat against Robert the Bruce and the Scots at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, a key victory on the road to Scottish independence. The king needed Lancaster's support to help keep England's northern borders safe, and soon enough the earl had increased his power to the point where he was effectively running the country. (Although ironically, he also turned out to be rather useless at governing.) The following year saw the emergence of the Great Famine that swept through Europe and decimated the English population, fuelling more discontent with the king.

Amid all this chaos was Isabella. With Gaveston dead, she should have assumed her rightful place by her husband's side, but unfortunately for her the king had found himself another male favourite. Hugh Despenser the Younger, as well as his father, had worked their way into becoming Edward's close advisers since Gaveston's death.

Gaveston had been a tolerable thorn in Isabella's side, but the Despensers were a much bigger problem. The younger Despenser was made royal chamberlain in 1318, a position that had previously been held by Gaveston and allowed plenty of access to the king. Again, it's believed Edward and Despenser may have been lovers.

Edward had failed to learn from his experience with Gaveston and his flagrant favouritism for the Despensers antagonised

RIGHT Isabella is welcomed to Paris by her brother, King Charles IV

FAR-RIGHT The Battle of Bannockburn was a disaster for King Edward II

© Getty Images

> "GAVESTON HAD BEEN A TOLERABLE THORN IN ISABELLA'S SIDE, BUT THE DESPENSERS WERE A MUCH BIGGER PROBLEM"

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BELOW Gaveston's head is presented to the Earl of Lancaster

Lancaster and the barons. In 1321, they threatened the king and demanded that the Despensers be exiled. The king, too reliant on his favourites, did not want to banish them. Once again taking on a conciliatory role to prevent an outbreak of war, Isabella went down on her knees and asked her husband to banish the Despensers. The king outwardly agreed but he had every intention of bringing the Despensers back as soon as possible.

With a truce between the two factions agreed, Isabella embarked on a pilgrimage to Canterbury in October 1321. During her return to London she arrived at Leeds Castle in Kent expecting to stay there. However, the castle belonged to Baron Badlesmere, who'd joined Lancaster and his fellow rebels in opposing the king. Badlesmere's wife, Margaret de Clare, refused to let Isabella enter.

Enraged, Isabella ordered her men to force their way into the castle and, in response Margaret ordered her archers in the garrison to fire on the queen's men. For Edward, this was the perfect justification for waging war on his enemies. He argued that refusing entry to the queen and the attack on her men was an act of treason and he laid siege to the castle. Margaret was forced to surrender and she was thrown into the Tower of London alongside her children, while some of her men were executed.

Considering that Isabella took a detour from the usual pilgrimage route to stop at Leeds Castle, it has been speculated that she may have stopped there to give her husband a reason to attack his enemies. It could have been a deliberate decision or Edward may have advised her to stay there without telling her the reason why. Regardless, the king was now in a strong enough position to recall the Despensers from exile.

Six months later, Edward secured victory at the Battle of Boroughbridge and captured his foremost enemy, Lancaster. Charged with treason, Lancaster was executed and with his death the king was finally able to rid himself of the Ordinances that had restricted his power for a decade. Edward - and the Despensers - were back in control. Unsurprisingly, the king used his newfound position of strength to pursue his enemies and exact revenge for their continued rebellion. Nobody, not even the women or ▶

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THE PATH TO WAR

Isabella continued to influence English politics for decades to come

During her time as regent, Isabella attempted to claim the French throne for her son Edward. Her brother, King Charles IV, died in 1328 without leaving a male heir to succeed him. His first cousin, Philip of Valois, was chosen to be the next king of France as Philip VI. However, Edward was actually Charles' nephew and nearest male relative, so why did he not inherit the French crown?

According to Salic law in France, the throne could not be inherited either by a woman or through the female line. Since Edward's claim to the French throne was through Isabella, a daughter of King Philip IV, he was excluded from the line of succession. But like his mother, Edward was not one to give up on what he saw as rightfully his.

He decided to press his claim to the French throne in 1337 after Philip confiscated his territories in France. In England, the throne could be inherited through the maternal bloodline. It was a precedent set by King Henry II, who became king in 1154 and claimed his right to the throne through his mother, Empress Matilda.

Edward's decision to fight for the French crown triggered the bloody Hundred Years' War that lasted for over a century, eventually ending in a French victory. The war left the ruling House of Plantagenet weakened in England and triggered a power struggle that led to the Wars of the Roses between the Houses of York and Lancaster – even after her death, Isabella had continued to shape English politics and history.

© Getty Images

children, was spared from Edward and the Despensers' wrath, much to Isabella's dismay.

The incident at Leeds Castle with Isabella had given Edward the justification he needed to go after his enemies. Yet instead of being rewarded, Isabella was further alienated from her husband. The younger Despenser did whatever he could to intervene in their relationship and limit Isabella's access to her husband, thereby weakening the possibility of her exercising any influence of her own. The queen despised and distrusted Despenser and by the end of 1322 she had chosen to live separately from her husband, leaving him with his favourite.

Relations between England and France reached another low in 1324 over Gascony, which belonged to Edward. As the Duke of Aquitaine, Edward was supposed to pay homage to King Charles IV, Isabella's brother, but he resisted. Frustrated, Charles declared that Edward had forfeited his lands and he seized Gascony.

Edward found himself in a difficult situation, as the tensions between the Despensers and the barons had once again worsened and he felt unable to leave the country amidst the instability. He responded to Charles' seizing his territory by arresting all of the French people who were living in England, treating them as unwelcome aliens in the country. Isabella, of course, was French and this gave Despenser the ammunition he needed to take her lands and arrest her household.

It is debated whether Edward and Despenser also removed Isabella's youngest children from her custody. While it was not unusual for royal children to be relocated with other noble families,

> "EDWARD'S REFUSAL TO BANISH DESPENSER WAS THE DEATH KNELL TO ANY CHANCE THAT THE KING AND QUEEN HAD OF RECONCILING"

the fact that it occurred amid tensions with France and that they were placed with the Despensers, whom Isabella hated, certainly means it was possible. Either way, Despenser had made his move against the queen and for Isabella there was no going back.

With tensions between England and France reaching boiling point, Isabella was sent as an ambassador to the French court to negotiate with her brother. She was the ideal candidate, not only because she was the French king's sister but because she had served as an ambassador to France on several previous occasions. As she was the queen and a woman, Edward and Despenser were assured that she would obey them and remain loyal to their interests.

Arriving in Paris in March 1325, Isabella quickly secured a truce with Charles and she convinced Edward to send their son, Prince Edward, to France to pay homage to her brother. But the moment Prince Edward arrived on French soil, everything changed. Now that her son was within her control, Isabella finally had the power to negotiate with her husband and demand her rightful place by his side.

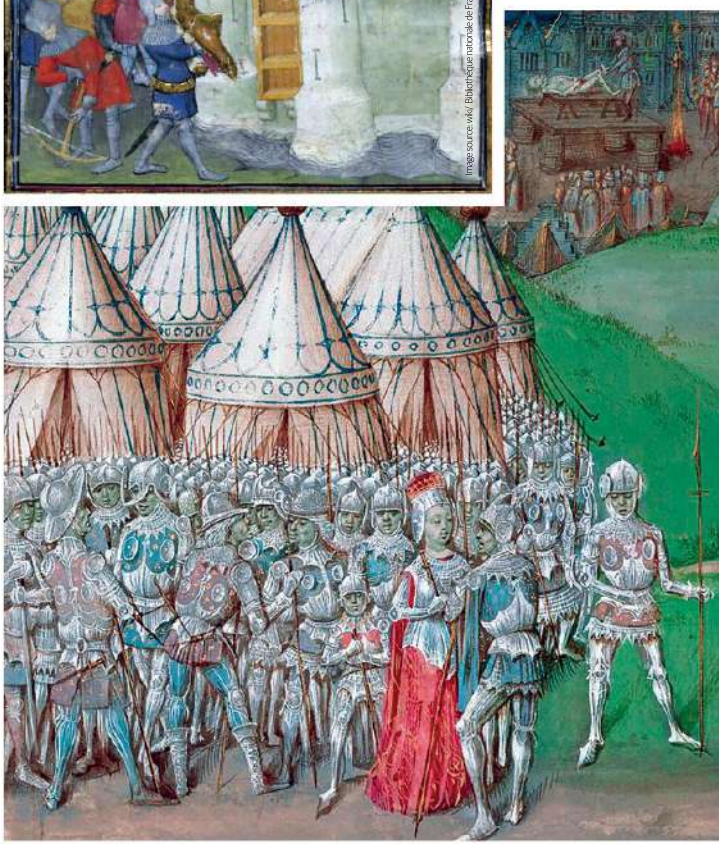
In a bold move, she publicly refused Edward's request for her to return to England with their son. Instead, she declared: "I feel that marriage is a union of a man and a woman, holding fast to the practice of a life together, and that someone has come between my husband and myself and is trying to break this bond. I declare that I will not return until this intruder is removed, but, discarding my marriage garment, shall put on the robes of widowhood and mourning until I am avenged of this Pharisee."

LEFT The queen returns to English shores accompanied by Prince Edward

Image source: wiki/ Bibliothèque nationale de France

LEFT Isabella oversees the siege of Bristol on her return to England

BELOW A 14th-century depiction of Isabella in armour with her troops, with Despenser on the scaffold in the background



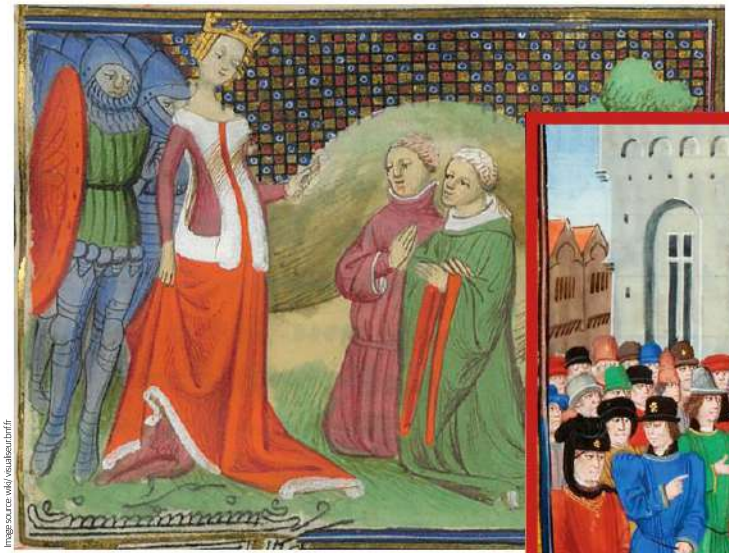


Image source: wiki/visualsarturbrnffr

LEFT Edmund Fitzalan and Hugh Despenser kneel before Isabella

BELOW Illustration of Despenser's grisly death from *Froissart's Chronicles*

BOTTOM Isabella was a shrewd polticial actor as Queen of England

© Alamy

Isabella's speech, recorded in the chronicle *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, was clear – she wanted Despenser gone or she would not return. Unfortunately, Edward was by now so dependent on his favourite that he denied her request. His refusal to banish Despenser was the death knell to any chance that the king and queen had of reconciling.

Not only was Isabella openly estranged from her husband, but rumours swirled that she was engaging in an affair with a man named Roger Mortimer. A soldier and a politician who had openly rebelled against Edward, Mortimer had been imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1322 for his revolt, before he managed to escape and flee to France in exile with other rebels.

Did Isabella and Mortimer have an affair? Nobody knows for sure, with little evidence to prove or disprove their relationship. One clear thing, however, is that a partnership between them was mutually beneficial. Mortimer still opposed Edward's rule and he was capable of leading an invasion of English shores.

As for Isabella, since Edward would not rid himself of Despenser then she would, even if that meant deposing her husband in favour of their son. By positioning herself as a widow whose marriage had come to an end because of Despenser, Isabella had set the stage to justify both her decision to remain in France, under her brother's protection, and to remove an anointed king from his throne. Furthermore, the welfare and peace of the kingdom were at stake.

In a politically shrewd move, Isabella arranged for her son's betrothal to his second cousin, Philippa of Hainault. For his daughter's dowry, William, Count of Hainault, provided the troops and ships that were crucial for Isabella and Mortimer's plot to overthrow Edward. With their forces, Isabella and Mortimer set sail on 22 September 1326, landing in England two days later.

As Isabella, dressed in widow's clothes, and Mortimer progressed inland their supporters grew, buoyed by the promise that the queen would remove her tyrannous husband and install their son as the new king. Along the way, they were joined by the Earl of Norfolk and the Henry, Earl of Lancaster, the brother of the previous earl. The elder Despenser was captured during Isabella and Mortimer's siege of Bristol and later executed.

Realising that their support had dissipated, Edward and Despenser went on the run but they were finally captured in Wales on 16 November. With Despenser at her mercy, Isabella took her revenge on the man who had actively sidelined her and sentenced him to death. Despenser's end certainly reflected Isabella's hatred for him as he was dragged through the streets naked before he was hanged, drawn and quartered. As for Edward, he was placed in Lancaster's custody while his fate was decided.

In January 1327, Parliament declared that Edward had to abdicate his throne in favour of his 14-year-old son Prince Edward. Forced to relinquish his crown, Edward supposedly wept as he signed his abdication to confirm the legality of his deposition, becoming the first anointed king to lose his throne in over 300 years. On the 25th, Edward III became king of England and his coronation was held one week later. ▶

ISABELLA THE MYTH

Cultural depictions of the queen have shaped her enduring legacy

In the centuries since her death, Isabella has frequently been portrayed as a conniving and greedy Jezebel who used her feminine wiles to betray her king and country. Even though Edward was an incompetent ruler and his deposition was welcomed by many, his mysterious death led to speculation that he had been murdered. The idea that a king had been unlawfully killed, perhaps on the orders of his wife, turned Edward into something of a martyr over time, while Isabella became a villain.

So entwined are certain myths about Isabella, coupled with a tantalising lack of evidence, that it is difficult to know the truth. In his poem, *The Curse Upon Edward*, 18th-century poet Thomas Gray notably referred to Isabella as the, "She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs/That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled mate." Gray's mention of Edward's bowels likely refers to the legend that Edward was killed by a red-hot poker shoved up his anus, that scorched his intestines and burnt him from the inside out. There is no evidence to suggest this is true and yet it is still widely repeated. Of course, Isabella is the one who is accused of ordering such a cruel and gruesome death.

Even the more sympathetic portrayals of Isabella are full of inaccuracies. The 1995 film *Braveheart* (below) depicts a neglected Isabella having an affair with William Wallace, one of the main leaders during the First War of Scottish Independence. It is implied that she fell pregnant with her son, the future Edward III, as a result of this affair and thereby ending the Plantagenet line of kings. In reality, Isabella was only around 10 years old and still living in France when Wallace was executed in 1305, and her son was not the product of an adulterous relationship.

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Image source: wiki/visualsoundfm

Since the new king was still a minor, he needed a regency council to run the country on his behalf until he could assume his personal rule. Although Isabella and Mortimer were not members of the regency council, they were controlling it behind the scenes as the ones wielding the real power.

Meanwhile, Edward II – who had remained in custody ever since his forced abdication – died at Berkeley Castle in Gloucestershire on 21 September 1327. While he was alive, he remained a very real threat to the new regime and there had been several failed attempts to rescue him from his imprisonment. Even so, whether Isabella or Mortimer ordered his death cannot be said for certain and this is still debated today. Another theory suggests that Edward may have escaped in disguise and fled to Europe.

Isabella and Mortimer had succeeded in their goal to remove a disastrous and inept king. But, in an ironic twist, they began indulging in the same behaviour that Edward and Despenser had been loathed for. With their new power, they began awarding themselves lands and accumulating wealth from the royal treasury to fund their extravagant lifestyle.

Aside from the lavish spending, Isabella and Mortimer became unpopular for reaching a peace agreement with Scotland. The wars with Scotland during Edward II's reign had been both costly

OPPOSITE-TOP The arrest of Edward II depicted in miniature

OPPOSITE-BOTTOM King Edward II died while imprisoned at Berkeley Castle

LEFT Mortimer is arrested at Nottingham Castle by Edward III's men

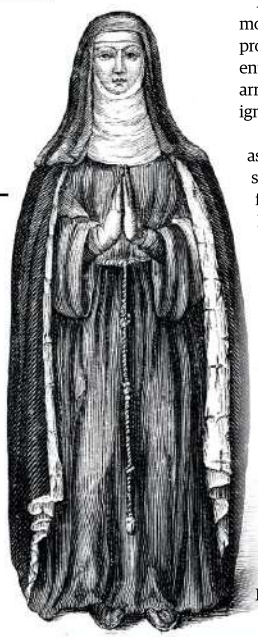
BELOW Isabella became a nun shortly before she died in 1358

> "IN AN IRONIC TWIST, ISABELLA AND MORTIMER BEGAN INDULGING IN THE SAME BEHAVIOUR THAT EDWARD AND DESPENSER HAD BEEN LOATHED FOR"

and unsuccessful and Isabella wanted to bring the conflict to an end. The Treaty of Northampton, signed in 1328, recognised Robert the Bruce as king of Scotland as well as Scotland's independence.

While concluding a war peacefully would usually be seen as a diplomatic triumph, Isabella and Mortimer's agreement with Scotland caused outrage in England, with the nobles considering it shameful and humiliating. Isabella, who had been hailed by some as a heroine who had saved the nation from her husband, found herself subject to the very same hatred that had once been directed at him.

Edward III himself had become increasingly frustrated with his mother and Mortimer's continued hold on power. He had married Philippa in 1328 and in June 1330 she had given birth to their first child and son, Edward of Woodstock. Now 17 and with his own heir, Edward III was ready to take control of his kingdom.

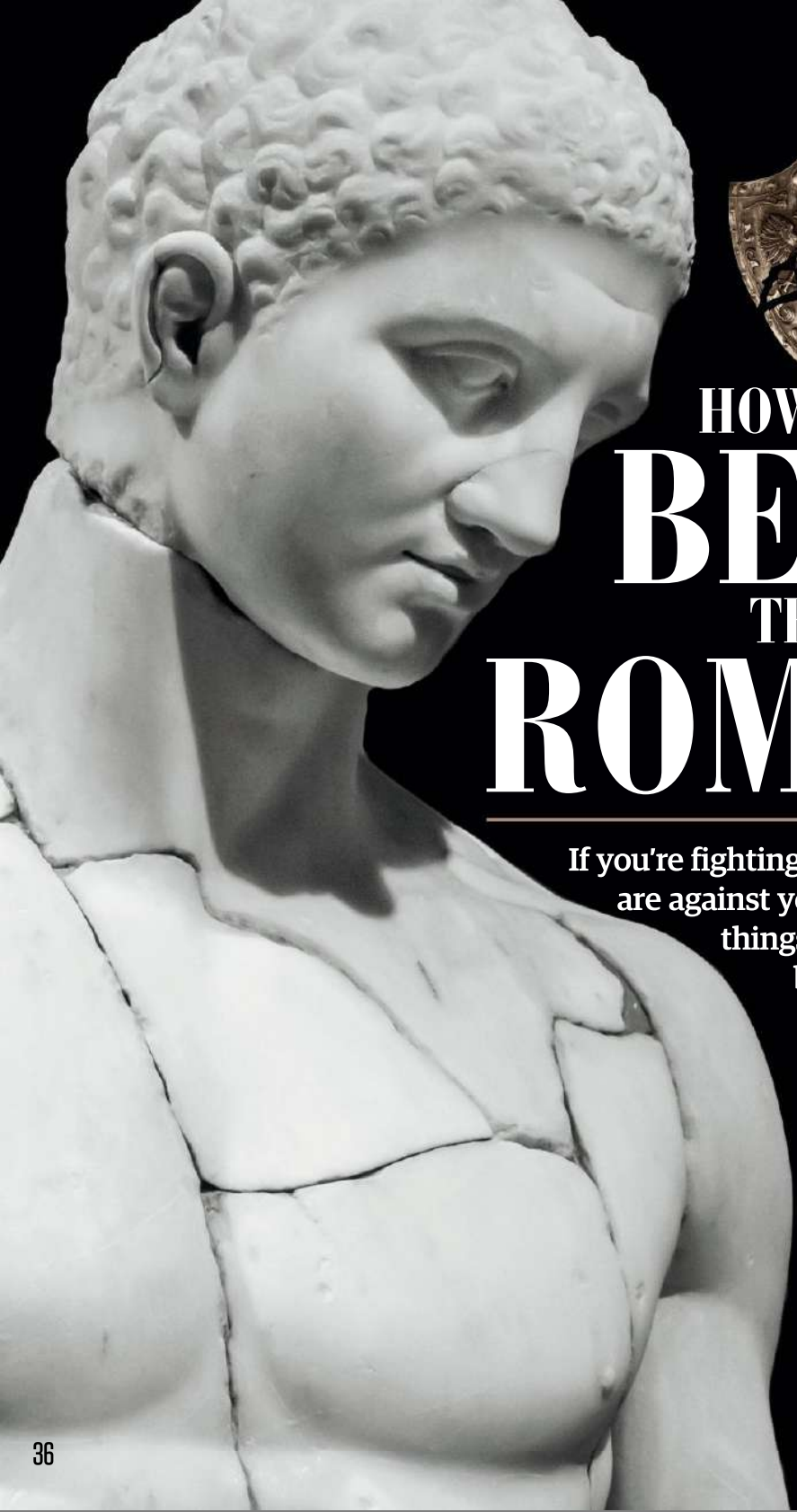


Realising that her son was turning against her, Isabella moved to Nottingham Castle with Mortimer and their men for protection. However, on 19 October Edward's troops successfully entered the castle through a secret tunnel and Mortimer was arrested. After just four years, Isabella's regency had come to an ignominious end.

Mortimer was hanged at Tyburn for the murder of Edward II, as well as usurping the king's power. Isabella was spared the same fate and instead she was placed under house arrest and forced to give up all the lands and money that she had granted herself during the regency. However, she was not kept in custody for long.

Although she had lost her grip on power and never entered the political arena again, Isabella was able to retire in comfort and she lived luxuriously, spending much of her time at Castle Rising in Norfolk. Remaining an influential figure at the English court, her son even provided her with an annual income of £3000, which was later increased to £4500. Isabella died at Hertford Castle on 22 August 1358 and was buried in Newgate.

There is no denying that Isabella was and remains a controversial figure. Her rebellion against Edward II, the mysterious circumstances surrounding his death as well as her short time as regent have all tainted her reputation, turning her into a traitor. While Isabella was far from perfect and she made mistakes, it is worth remembering that she was also a formidable woman whose bravery changed the course of English history forever.



HOW TO BEAT THE ROMANS

If you're fighting the Romans the odds are against you, but there are some things you can do to tilt the balance in your favour

Written by Murray Dahm

In the long history of the Roman Empire, the Romans (obviously) won many more times than they lost. In their military history, however, they also suffered some devastating defeats and setbacks. If they were any other empire, those defeats may have spelled their demise, but the Romans had a habit of coming back and, if you did not wipe them out, they would get you in the end. There are, however, several tricks and lessons we can learn from those occasions on which the Romans were bested. If you learn your lessons from history well, perhaps you too could beat the Romans.

TRICK THEM AND TRAP THEM

The Battle of the Caudine Forks, 321 BCE

As Rome began to take the first steps towards empire and pressed her cause to become the masters of the Italian peninsula, she came into conflict with her neighbours. One of the most powerful of these were the Samnites, located to the south. The Samnite commander, Gaius Pontius, sent a soldier in disguise to tell the Romans that the Samnites were besieging a city (which they were not). The Romans were taken in by this subterfuge and marched to relieve the city. Their route would take them through a narrow mountain pass (the Caudine Forks) with only a single entrance and exit. When the Romans entered the pass, however, they found the far end barricaded and their retreat now blocked by the Samnite army. The Samnite commander asked his father for advice and was told that the Samnites could either kill every Roman at their leisure and eliminate them as a threat, or free them (and gain them as a friend and ally). Eventually (as the Roman army starved), the Romans were forced to go 'under the yoke', a sign of abject humiliation and subservience. The Romans would long remember the humiliation but soon renewed the war with the Samnites, eventually conquering them in 290 BCE.

BELOW A contemporary Lucanian fresco records the battle. It was one of Rome's most humiliating defeats

© Alamy

Image source: Wikimedia Commons

MAKE THEM THINK THEY ARE WINNING

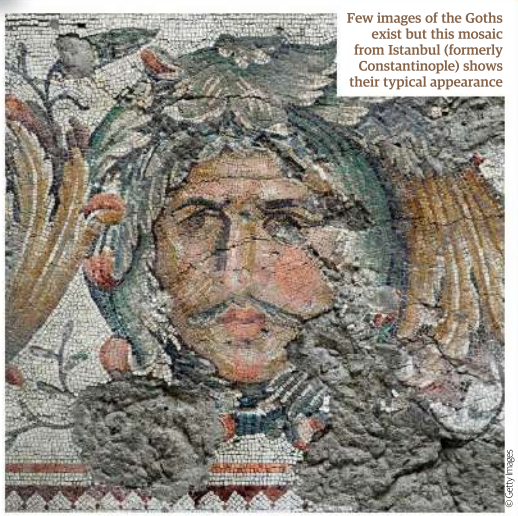
The Battle of Cannae, 2 August 216 BCE

The Carthaginian general Hannibal Barca marched his army from Spain and (unexpectedly) invaded Italy in 218 BCE. He inflicted several defeats on the Romans over the next two years but the greatest of these was at Cannae. The Romans marched to meet Hannibal on the plains of Apulia in southeastern Italy. Hannibal drew up his army with his Spanish and Celtic mercenaries in the middle of his formation and his African veterans on each wing, with his cavalry placed on each flank to protect the infantry. The Romans had some 80,000 men, more than the Carthaginians, drawn up in a deep formation but in the usual three lines: hastati, principes and triarii. The Romans advanced and forced the Carthaginian centre back – this was the usual sign you were winning a battle. Meanwhile, Hannibal's cavalry had forced the inferior Roman cavalry to flee from the field. As the Romans advanced, confident they were winning, the African veterans were able to press in on the Roman flanks. When the Carthaginian cavalry returned, they charged the rear of the Roman lines and the double envelopment was complete. The Roman army was annihilated in a battle that is still lauded and studied to this day. Only 15,000 Romans survived.

MAKE THEM ATTACK YOU ON GROUND OF YOUR CHOOSING

The Battle of Adrianople, 9 August 378 CE

In 376 CE, a number of Gothic tribes gathered on the far bank of the Danube and asked for admission to the Roman Empire. Rome had by that point been split into two empires, east and west, and the Goths were seen as a potential bulwark against the Huns, a marauding and warlike people who had forced the Goths westwards. Allowed into the empire, the Goths were immediately maltreated by Roman officers and officials and broke into revolt. Over the next two years they defeated several armies and the Eastern Roman emperor himself, Valens, was forced to muster an army and deal with the threat. The Goths were led by an able strategist in Fritigern, who was cunning and wily. Valens was also jealous of his nephew, Gratian, the western emperor who had recently been successful against various German tribes. Fritigern kept his actual numbers concealed and therefore lured an over-eager Valens to face him alone. Ill-prepared, Valens marched his army against the Gothic wagon-laager, where his troops began to skirmish before they were fully deployed. The Gothic cavalry charged unexpectedly, forcing the Roman cavalry from the field. They then surrounded the Roman infantry and overwhelmed them with missiles. The losses were as great as those at Cannae.



Few images of the Goths exist but this mosaic from Istanbul (formerly Constantinople) shows their typical appearance

© Getty Images

Main image: © Alamy
Inset shield: © Getty Images

TRICK, ISOLATE AND SURROUND THEM

Battle of Carrhae, 9 June 53 BCE

The development of Rome's empire meant individual commanders competed to add to it. While Julius Caesar was subjugating Gaul, his companion Crassus (the wealthiest man in Rome) decided that he would add Parthia to compete with Caesar and gain glory for himself. He marched an army of seven legions (some 50,000 men) into the Parthian Empire in 53 BCE. Crassus' army was mostly infantry but that of the Parthians consisted mostly of cavalry, both horse archers and heavily armoured cataphracts. Although he was advised to avoid the desert (the most direct route), Crassus ignored this advice and marched directly towards the Parthian cities. The Parthian king, Orodes II, sent out his general, Surena, with an all-cavalry force which probably numbered only 10,000 men. Betrayed by his guide into attacking the Parthians, Crassus marched into the driest part of the desert towards the town of Carrhae. There, he encountered Surena's forces and formed his men into a hollow square. Surena was able to ride his horse archers around the square and pepper it with arrows, then follow up with heavy cavalry charges when the Romans broke ranks to attack. He also used feigned retreats and the famed 'Parthian shot' (an archer turning and firing from a retreating horse). The Romans surrendered, suffering 30,000 casualties and losing several legionary standards.

ABOVE Crassus was unable to deal with the combination of horse archers and heavily armoured cataphracts

Image source: wiki/British Museum

TOP A depiction of a cataphract in action against what appears to be a wild animal of some kind

© Getty Images

CATCH THEM UNAWARES

The Battle of the Allia, 18 July c.390 BCE

The Gallic people the Senones had invaded Italy, settling in the north. They were on the march but the Romans did not take any extra precautions, they simply mustered their usual army. They were therefore surprised when the Senones marched against them and met them at the confluence of the Tiber and Allia Rivers, only 16km from Rome. The Romans had no time to set up camp or propitiate the gods. They did, however, extend their line to match the width of the Gallic line, which made their own line dangerously thin. The Senones, suspecting a trick, attacked the Roman reserves placed on a hill, quickly routing them. This led to panic and flight among the rest of the Romans and they were cut down as they fled. The Senones were stunned at their unexpected and overwhelming victory. Rome was now undefended and the Senones moved against the city before nightfall. Many in the city fled. Expecting another trick, the Senones waited until the next day to enter the city, putting it to the sword. They besieged the remaining residents but were eventually paid off to leave. Memories of Rome's fall to the Senones were evoked with fear for hundreds of years afterwards.

BELOW When the Senones attempted to climb the Capitol, the alarm was raised by the geese sacred to the goddess Juno

© Alamy

ABOVE The Romans suffered a huge defeat at the hands of Germanic tribes

INSET A cavalry mask found at the favoured site of the battle, Kalkriese, Germany

LURE THEM INTO A FOREST AND AMBUSH THEM

The Battle of Teutoburg, September 9 CE

The first Roman emperor, Augustus, continued to push the boundaries of the Roman Empire outward, especially in northern Europe, advancing beyond the Rhine. The armies of the empire had begun to rely on Romanised locals to man her armies, and that would lead to disaster in the Teutoburg Forest. The Cherusci tribe had been defeated in 9 BCE and the sons of the king, Arminius and Flavus, were sent to be educated at Rome. Arminius rose in the Roman army becoming both a citizen and of equestrian rank. By 9 CE he was a trusted adviser to the governor of Germania, Publius Quinctilius Varus.

Varus had three legions (XVII, XVIII and XIX) and advanced with them beyond the Rhine towards the Weser. Arminius, however, was in communication with the tribes and they ambushed the Romans on the march in an isolated wood, destroying the three legions over the course of several days as the Romans attempted to flee. The loss became known as the Varian Disaster (the Clades Variana), putting an immediate stop to Augustan expansion of the empire. The numbers of Varus' legions were never again given to Roman units and Augusts is supposed to have cried out: "Varus! Give me back my legions!"

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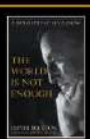
EXPERT BIOS

© Laurie Campbell/Buckton

PROFESSOR OLIVER BUCKTON

Oliver Buckton is professor of English at Florida Atlantic University and an expert in espionage literature and film, among numerous other topics. He is the author of *The World is Not Enough: A Biography of Ian Fleming*.



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DAVID ZARITSKY

David Zaritsky is a Bond expert and super-fan, and the mastermind behind *The James Bond Experience* YouTube channel and website. His love of the films centres on "living like James Bond" and emulating the style featured within them.

IAN FLEMING

WHERE JAMES BOND BEGAN

From top-secret operations during World War II to creating the world's most famous spy, we uncover the author's extraordinary life

Written by Callum McKelvie

"I'm going to write the spy story to end all spy stories"

This statement must have seemed half humorous to Robert Harling when it was said to him by a friend and fellow officer in the 30 Commando Assault Unit during World War II. Harling could hardly have known that in 1952, Ian Fleming, the man who uttered those now-immortal words, would sit down and begin writing *Casino Royale*. Not only would the book live up to Fleming's promise and become a classic of its genre, but it gave birth to James Bond, the world's most famous fictional secret agent. But what of Fleming himself? The man whose imagination took readers to exotic locales like the Alpine retreat of Piz Gloria or the island of Crab Key and invented villains such as Auric Goldfinger and Dr Julius No? Much has been made of Fleming's womanising and appetite for fine food and drink – but just who was the man that gave birth to Bond?

Ian Lancaster Fleming was born on 28 May 1908. His father, Valentine Fleming, was the Conservative MP for South Oxfordshire and his two sons Ian and Peter experienced an upbringing typical of the upper class elites of the time. Professor Oliver Buckton, author of *The World is Not Enough*, a new biography of Ian Fleming, explains: "Ian grew up in a kind of privileged environment. He went to Durnford Preparatory School in Dorset where, although there was some bullying, he had good experiences and developed a lifelong love of nature." However, on 20 May of 1917 an event was to occur that would have a profound effect on the young boy. On that morning, his father Valentine, who was serving as an officer in the trenches of France in WWI, was struck by a German shell and killed instantly. It seems no coincidence that years later Fleming would choose to orphan his iconic creation, both of Bond's parents being killed in a climbing accident when he was 11.

Following his years at Durnford, Fleming (like many boys of his class) found himself enrolled at Eton. He struggled academically but excelled at sports, twice winning the victor ludorum. "His older brother Peter was a brilliant student, popular and always did the right thing," says Buckton. "Ian was intelligent but he didn't thrive academically as Peter did." Fleming also developed a reputation for enjoying the company of young women and so a deal was struck enabling him to leave Eton a term early to prepare for Royal Military Academy ▶

BELOW : Ian Fleming at his writing desk at Goldeneye, Jamaica

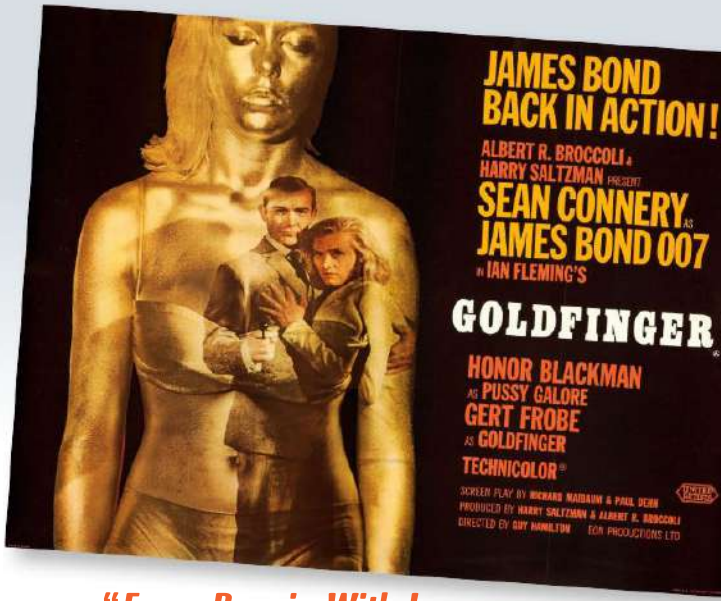
Main image: © Alamy Inset image: © Getty Images

Sandhurst. But the young man proved unsuited to a military career and he withdrew, before being sent to Austria to attend the Villa Tennerhof, an elite specialist school. Returning to England to sit the Foreign Office exams, he failed to pass.

His failure to enter the Foreign Office allowed him to embark upon a career more suited to his talents – as a journalist for Reuters. The travel opportunities excited Fleming, particularly in 1933 when the 25-year-old reporter was sent to cover the Metropolitan-Vickers trial in Moscow. The trial concerned six British engineers who were found guilty of espionage by the Soviets. Amusingly, during his stay he attempted, but failed, to gain an interview with Joseph Stalin. Despite enjoying this work, however, Fleming eventually bowed to family pressure and embarked upon a short-lived career as a stockbroker. Needless to say, the work proved unsuitable and he was not successful.

Soon events were to occur that would not only alter the course of Fleming's life, but history itself when on 3 September 1939 Britain declared war on Nazi Germany. In May of that year Fleming was recruited as the personal assistant to Rear Admiral John Henry Godfrey, the director of Naval Intelligence, despite Fleming having no prior experience. He spent much of the war concocting deception operations, many of which demonstrated his extraordinary imagination. One such plan supposedly involved hiring the renowned occultist Aleister Crowley in order to interrogate Rudolf Hess following his 1941 flight to Scotland and subsequent capture. But perhaps the most well-known of the operations Fleming was involved in was the macabre Operation Mincemeat. This involved dressing a corpse in a Royal Marines uniform, chaining an attaché case full of fake documents to its wrist, and dropping the body off the coast of Spain to be found by the Germans and then deceive them that an Allied invasion of the Greece and Sardinia was imminent. Yet Fleming's most important contribution to the war was his creation of the 30 Commando Assault Unit (30AU), nicknamed his 'Red Indians'. One of 30AU's biggest successes was its capture of the German Naval Intelligence archives at Tambach Castle in Bavaria. Reflecting on his wartime colleague, Ewen Montagu, a fellow naval officer, stated: "Fleming is charming to be with but would sell his own grandmother. I like him a lot."

Naturally much emphasis has been placed on the fact that Fleming worked in intelligence and that his most famous creation was a spy, with dramas such as the BBC's *Fleming: The Man Who Would Be Bond* solidifying the idea that Fleming had a high-octane, action-packed war. The reality, however, was somewhat different. "He wasn't actually out in the field with them [30AU], he was more of a manager," Buckton explains. "In some ways he was like an M, running things from London, rather than James Bond. His father was a war hero and Fleming felt he had to live up to that during his war career and he never quite did."



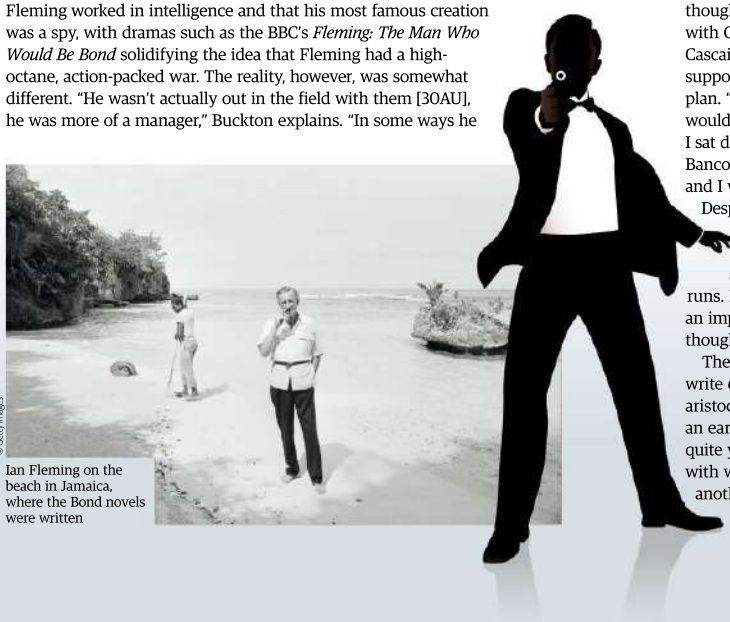
ABOVE The original poster for *Goldfinger*. The film made Bond a worldwide sensation but was released shortly after Fleming's death

"*From Russia With Love* was named as one of President Kennedy's ten favourite books"

Following the war, Fleming returned to his career as a journalist. Then in April 1953, when he was 44, he published his first novel, *Casino Royale*. He had begun the book two years earlier in Jamaica at Goldeneye, the home he had built for himself and where all the subsequent Bond novels were written. The book introduces the world to British secret agent James Bond, who is sent on a mission to defeat Soviet banker Le Chiffre at a high-stakes poker game. Fleming decided he needed a "flat, crass" name for his hero, 'borrowing' James Bond from the author of *Birds of the West Indies*, a book he was fond of. *Casino Royale* was purportedly based on a true event that occurred during the war, though Admiral Godfrey would later contest this. While travelling with Godfrey, the two gentlemen went to the Estoril Casino in Cascais, Portugal. Fleming was informed that the casino was supposedly rife with German agents and so concocted a cunning plan. "I suddenly had the brilliant idea," Fleming stated, "that I would take on these Germans and strip them of these funds. So I sat down at the table and Banco'd one of the Germans and lost, Banco'd him again and lost again, Banco'd him for a third time and I was cleaned out. So it wasn't a very successful exploit."

Despite Fleming's assertion that he only wrote the book due to his upcoming marriage and the need to "take my mind off the agony", the initial print run of nearly 5,000 copies sold out in a single month, as did the second and third runs. In the USA, however, *Casino Royale* failed to make much of an impact and was renamed and rereleased as *You Asked For It*, though this did very little to help matters.

The marriage that Fleming credited as inspiring him to write *Casino Royale* was to Ann O'Neil. "She came from a very aristocratic background," Buckton explains. "Her grandfather was an earl, she went to Cheltenham Ladies' College and she married quite young, only 19. She was a socialite, she loved to host parties with writers, artists and intellectuals. She became involved with another man, Viscount Rothermere, at the same time she was involved with Fleming. Her first husband was killed in



© Getty Images

Ian Fleming on the beach in Jamaica, where the Bond novels were written

World War II and, despite marrying Rothermere, she continued her relationship with Fleming. Eventually Rothermere divorced her in 1951, when she was already pregnant with Fleming's son. It was a classic case of the opposites attracting. She spent time in Jamaica but in the end she went off the country, and because it was so much part of his life and his writing they began to sort of drift apart. It was a tormented relationship in many ways."

Between 1951 and 1964, Fleming wrote 14 Bond novels, his books increasing in popularity. The fifth, *From Russia With Love*, was one of President Kennedy's favourite books and even French literary darling Jean-Paul Sartre is said to have been a fan. Of course, there were detractors and Fleming's penchant of including sex and violence in his novels earned him much criticism. Reviewing *Dr No* in 1958, Paul Johnson stated that: "There are three basic ingredients in *Dr No*, all unhealthy, all thoroughly English: the sadism of a schoolboy bully, the mechanical two-dimensional sex-longings of a frustrated adolescent and the crude, snob cravings of a suburban adult." These days the books continue to garner controversy due to Fleming's attitudes to women, race, colonialism and homosexuality among other matters. "We can view the books as not only a sign of the times but as a historical way for us to learn," says David Zaritsky of The Bond Experience. "Clearly there are some jingoistic, racist and colonialist attitudes within his books. Part of that is Fleming, a middle-aged man, raised during the Empire, embracing and trying to save colonial traditions. I run a book club and we often talk about 2021 eyes talking about 1950s writing and saying 'that's not right'. Now, we can step back and say: 'Look how much we have evolved and are now on the right side of history'."

The story of James Bond took a dramatic turn when Fleming found himself involved with an Irish film producer called Kevin McClory. In 1954, shortly following *Casino Royale*'s publication, Fleming had witnessed a lacklustre television adaptation for the US series *Climax!* in which his character was transformed into the American 'Jimmy Bond'. Fleming was hopeful when introduced to McClory that his books would finally get the cinematic treatment they deserved. As Robert Sellers describes in *The Battle for Bond*: "McClory's approach to Bond was radical. Ditching the idea of filming one of the existing novels, he was now convinced that the only way to go was to create a totally new Bond scenario, out of which would emerge an original screenplay geared entirely towards the tastes and requirements of a modern film audience." Introducing screenwriter Jack Whittingham to the project, a storyline developed which would exploit McClory's desire to not only make a film in the Bahamas but also utilise underwater photography. However, Fleming soon became bored and as ▶

3x © Alamy

Screenwriter Jack Whittingham and producer Kevin McClory leaving court during the Thunderball case in 1963

BENSON AND BOND

From 1997 to 2003 Raymond Benson wrote nine James Bond novels. He spoke to All About History about the influence of Ian Fleming, his favourite books and how he came to write Bond

How did you become involved in writing James Bond novels?
That's a bit of a long story, but I'll be brief! I wrote a non-fiction book in the early 1980s called *The James Bond Bedside Companion*. It was first published in the US in 1984. When I did the research for it, I met members of Ian Fleming's family, his business people, his friends and colleagues, and others. Peter Janson-Smith, the man who was Fleming's literary agent and chairman of the literary business (called Glidrose Publications at the time... now it's called Ian Fleming Publications) liked the book, we became friends, and stayed in touch through the rest of the 80s and into the 90s. The book was published in the UK in 1988. Then, in late-1995, Peter told me that current author John Gardner was retiring from the gig and Peter wanted to know if I might like to "give it a shot". I had to come up with an outline for a novel on spec, which went through an approval process that involved Glidrose, the British publisher, and the American publisher. Once that was approved, I had to write the first four chapters with the same approval process. After that, I received the contract to move forward. I ended up writing six original novels and three film novelisations, plus a handful of short stories.

Were you influenced more by the books or films, or both equally?
Definitely the books, but one can't help but be influenced by the films as well. When we began my tenure, there was a discussion of what direction I should take. It was ultimately decided that I should stay in sync with the current Pierce Brosnan films by keeping the books contemporary, make M a woman, and be more 'cinematic' in the writing. I wanted to be true to Fleming's original character, though, with all his vices intact. They said, "Go for it," and I did. Thus, my books are a blend of the literary Bond and the cinematic Bond, which is what all the parties involved wanted at the time.

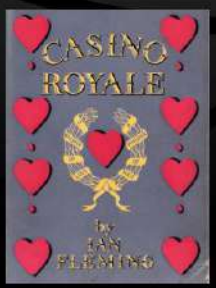
Are there any particular ways in which you tried to emulate Fleming or use elements created by him?
I attempted to remain faithful to Fleming's character. I was not required to try to copy Fleming's writing style – who can? – but instead be true to the spirit of the original books.

Of the books you wrote, do you have a favourite, and if so why?
That's like choosing between children! When pressed, I suppose I can point to what is called 'The Union Trilogy', which are three of the books that are interconnected: *High Time to Kill*, *DoubleShot* and *Never Dream of Dying*. Of the six I did, maybe these are the strongest in terms of characters, plots and locations.

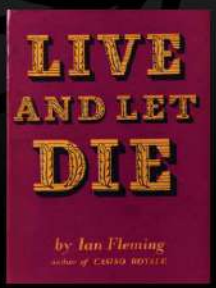
As a writer, what do you think was Fleming's biggest asset or skill?
It would certainly be his descriptive powers, something Kingsley Amis called "The Fleming Effect". Fleming had a marvellous way with words. His descriptions of the underwater world are especially vivid.

Do you have a favourite Fleming Bond novel?
I love them all, but I usually give the nod to *From Russia, With Love*. *Dr No* is a close second.

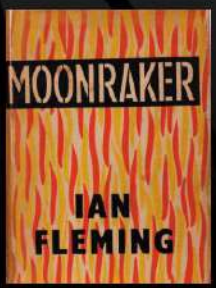
JAMES BOND: THE BOOKS



Casino Royale *1953*
British Secret Service Agent James Bond is sent on a mission to defeat Soviet banker Le Chiffre in a high-stakes poker game.

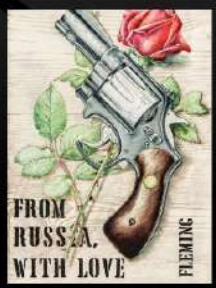


Live and Let Die *1954*
Bond is sent to Jamaica to investigate Mr Big, a crime boss, voodoo cult leader and operative of Soviet organisation SMERSH.



Moonraker *1955*
Bond investigates the Moonraker, a nuclear missile project and its mysterious head, Hugo Drax.

Diamonds are Forever *1956*
Bond travels to America on the hunt for the gang behind a diamond-smuggling operation.



From Russia, With Love *1957*
SMERSH tries to defeat Bond once and for all, contriving a plot to kill him on the Orient Express.

Dr No *1958*
Bond goes to Jamaica to investigate the death of a fellow secret agent, and takes on the malevolent Dr No.

Goldfinger *1959*
Investigating gold smuggler Auric Goldfinger, Bond uncovers a sinister plot to rob Fort Knox in Kentucky, USA.

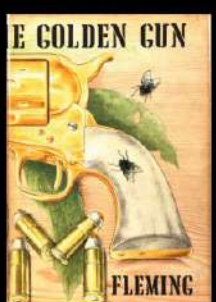
For Your Eyes Only *1960*
Contains five short stories, four of which were plots for an unmade James Bond television series.

Thunderball *1961*
Deadly international terrorist organisation SPECTRE steals two atomic bombs and holds the West to ransom.

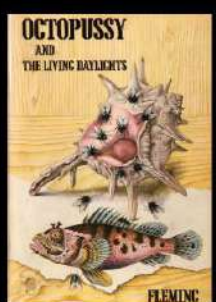
The Spy Who Loved Me *1962*
Fleming writes from the perspective of a woman – Bond appears only in the book's third section.

On Her Majesty's Secret Service *1963*
Bond travels to Switzerland to hunt down SPECTRE chief Blofeld and falls in love.

You Only Live Twice *1964*
Following the death of his wife Bond is sent to Japan, where he has a final showdown with Blofeld.



The Man with the Golden Gun *1965*
Bond investigates the assassin Scaramanga. Unfinished and published posthumously.



Octopussy and The Living Daylights *1966*
A collection of short stories that was published posthumously.

All images: © Alamy

Whittingham was putting the finishing touches to the draft script Fleming was using many of the ideas in his novel *Thunderball*. He neglected to acknowledge both McClory and Whittingham's contributions, a mistake that would cost him dearly.

"After the novel was published they sued him. It was a blow, it was the point where he lost control of James Bond," Buckton explains. "Eventually the court said that McClory and Whittingham had to be credited in future publications of the novel, and it also gave McClory the right to be producer of the film. This wrenched control away from Fleming of his prized character and created a rift with his longtime friend Ivar Bryce because Bryce convinced him to settle out of court and was concerned for Fleming's health."

Bryce had reason to be worried. For years Fleming had lived an extravagant lifestyle akin to that of his creation. In 1946, Fleming confessed to smoking 70 cigarettes and drinking at least a quarter of a bottle of gin a day. He was particularly fond of scrambled eggs, but made with an extremely butter-rich recipe by the Bryce's housekeeper, May Maxwell. As if this was not bad enough, he was a keen sports and outdoors man, exerting himself while simultaneously neglecting his health. In 1961 it was this lifestyle, as well as the ongoing court case, that resulted in Fleming suffering a heart attack. During his recovery he was denied access to a typewriter, but nothing was said about a pen and paper. He spent the time writing his only children's novel, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, for his son Casper.

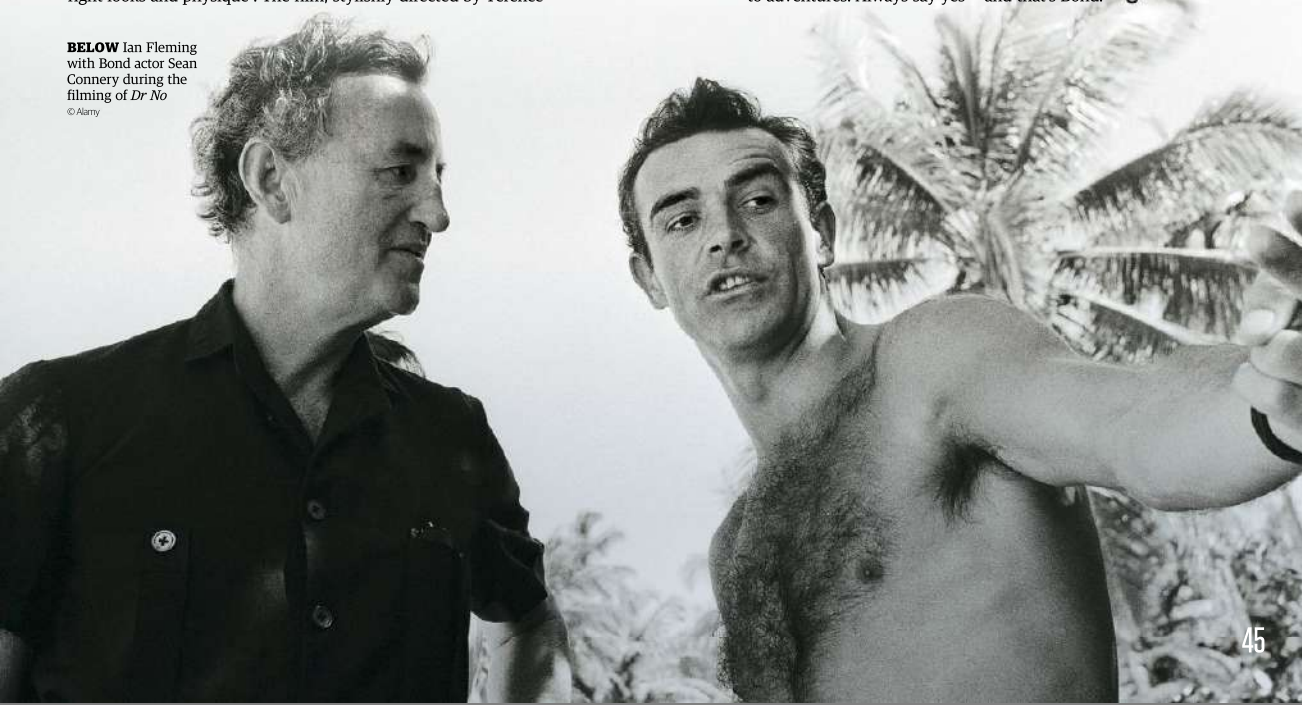
Despite the huge effect both the legal battle and heart attack had on Fleming, in 1962 events occurred that guaranteed his name would live forever. Two American producers, Albert R Broccoli and Harry Saltzman, had acquired the rights to film the novels and, obtaining a modest budget from United Artists, chose *Dr No* as the first to be filmed. Despite Fleming's initial scepticism of the choice of Sean Connery as James Bond (purportedly referring to him an "overgrown muscle man" or "stunt man"), he wrote to his mistress Blanche Blackwell and stated that the actor was "a real charmer – fairly unknown but a good actor with the right looks and physique". The film, stylishly directed by Terence

"Fleming confessed to smoking 70 cigarettes and drinking at least a quarter of a bottle of gin a day"

Young and enhanced by the futuristic production design of Ken Adam, proved to be a surprise hit and was quickly followed by *From Russia With Love* in 1963. Fleming attended the premiere but insisted his doctor be present and retired early from the after-party, his ill health beginning to take its toll.

On 17 September 1964 *Goldfinger* premiered in London, the third of Saltzman and Broccolli's adaptations. Whereas the previous films had been successful, no one could have foreseen the global phenomenon that *Goldfinger* would create. The film's initial box office run earned $46 million worldwide, and after several successive reissues this would increase to $125 million, 40-times its initial cost. James Bond was now a cinematic icon but unfortunately it was too late for his creator. A month earlier, on 12 August (his son Casper's birthday) Ian Fleming passed away. He had been holidaying at his home near Sandwich, Kent, when he had suffered another heart attack, and this time it would prove fatal. He was 56.

Now, nearly 60 years after his death, Fleming's books continue to attract readers and the 25th James Bond film, *No Time to Die*, awaits release. Of course, at times the movie series has deviated far from the source material, such as when the 1979 film *Moonraker* replaced Fleming's Kent-set story about a top-secret missile with a big-budget epic whose climax took place in outer space. Yet even these, Zaritsky argues, still owe something to their creator. "All the films have some Fleming influence," he explains. "Some are through the character of Bond and some are from a lifestyle point – fine locations, fine wine and good clothing. Bond lives life to the full because this could be his last day. The whole point is what's the point of living if you can't feel alive? That's a Fleming influence. He has a wonderful quote – 'Never say no to adventures. Always say yes' – and that's Bond."



BELOW Ian Fleming with Bond actor Sean Connery during the filming of *Dr No*
© Alamy

THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR

Cultivated over centuries, the samurai developed a philosophy where honour, loyalty, discipline and a noble death were more important than life itself

Written by Hareth Al Bustani

Few acts better encapsulate the spirit of the samurai than the ritualistic form of suicidal belly-cutting, known as seppuku, or harakiri. The ultimate extension of martial virtue, honour suicide was woven through the gradual development of samurai culture. It represented an embrace of an agonising death over dishonour, an oath of loyalty to one's lord unto the grave, and the ultimate form of discipline.

The act was also incredibly subjective in intent; for those who had disgraced themselves, it was a grotesque form of baptism by pain, through which warriors could purify their transgressions. Like Cato, who killed himself to deny Julius Caesar the satisfaction of pardoning him, it was also practised as a form of protest.

Ritualistic suicide in Japan can be traced back to the act of junshi – a form of 'voluntary' human sacrifice, where servants were buried alive alongside their dead masters. Although junshi was outlawed in 646, it reared its head again just three years later, when a prominent official, Soga Kurayamada, was falsely accused of plotting to kill his son-in-law.

Denied the opportunity to defend his honour, he proved his innocence by strangling himself inside a temple he had built for the emperor. In a show of solidarity, his wife, children and servants followed suit. Yet, although Kurayamada certainly died like a true samurai, his example was merely a prelude of things to come. The samurai order did not begin taking shape until the Heian era, particularly with the rise of the man who was dubbed the 'first samurai', Taira no Masakado.

The most renowned warrior, or tsuwamono, of his time, after defeating his rival family members, he broke out in rebellion, declaring himself the 'New Emperor'. When his own brother denounced him for acting against the Mandate of Heaven, he spat back: "Our age dictates that those who are victorious become rulers." In other words, power was not a self-justifying force, but waiting to be grabbed by whoever was bold enough to seize it.

Despite committing an egregious crime in rebelling against the emperor, Masakado legitimised his power-grab with a sort of Robin Hood reputation. On one occasion, when he was ordered to arrest an outlaw, he refused, proclaiming it his duty to protect the weak against the strong.

After capturing one of his rival uncles, he allowed him to escape unharmed, lest he break the social taboo of slaying a family member. That same uncle went on to attack Masakado, erecting images of his father and grandfather at the front of his army, knowing that Masakado's men would be reluctant to attack images of his ancestors. Coupled with his martial prowess, this reputation drew 5,000 soldiers to his banner like moths to the flame.

Simultaneously, on the opposite end of the archipelago, the governor-turned-pirate king Fujiwara no Sumitomo began ▶

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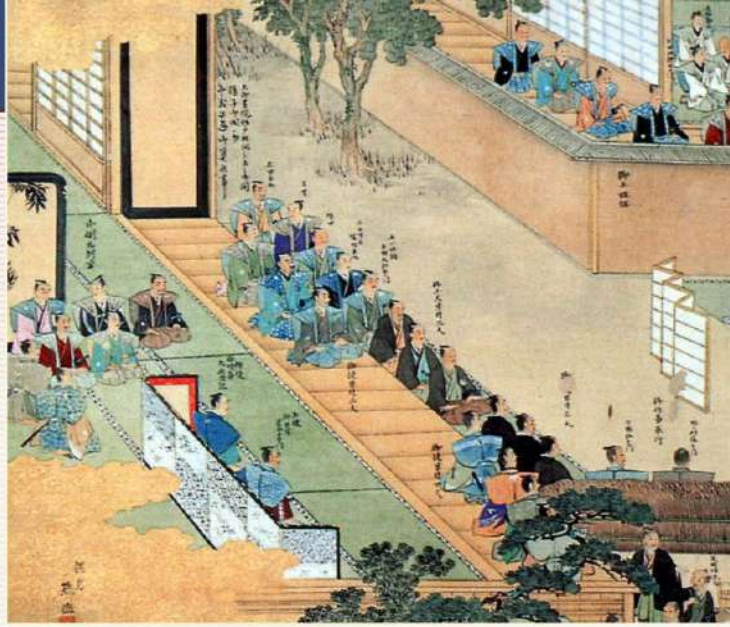
大高源吾

© Getty Images

LEFT Masaki Kobayashi's 1962 film *Harakiri* tears apart the mythos of bushidō, presenting it as a form of propaganda used to perpetuate a hypocritical power structure



RIGHT In samurai society, when warriors disgraced themselves or their lords they would often seek redemption through the ritualistic belly-cutting suicide known as seppuku

BUSHIDŌ TODAY

After World War II, Japan disavowed war for pacifism; disbanding its army and creating the Self-Defence Force

Japan's post-war constitution prohibited the country from fighting offensive wars, relegating the Self-Defence Force (SDF) to a form of reserve defence force.

In 2014, amid growing tensions with China and North Korea, Shinzo Abe's Japanese parliament began broadening the SDF's powers. However, the vast majority of the Japanese populace oppose this revision and remain committed to pacifism. The samurai values of honour, discipline and martial skill remain hallmarks of the country's most popular martial arts, such as karate, kendo, judo, jujutsu and aikido. However, these are largely taught as forms of self-defence and personal development rather than preparation for war.

Some analysts see other aspects of samurai culture – formality, respect for hierarchy and discipline – in Japan's modern work culture, especially among the country's 'salarymen'. Fuelling the stereotype, in 1999 a disgruntled manager at Bridgestone committed seppuku with a fish knife after a heated argument with the company's president.

Yet, for the most part, the samurai code of bushidō has been relegated to the confines of history. Although Japanese pop culture tends to embrace an idealised interpretation of the samurai, some – such as Masaki Kobayashi's 1962 film *Harakiri* – have reframed the virtue of blind loyalty unto death as an unjust social contract used by the powerful to enforce immoral decisions on the powerless.

raiding the Inland Sea with a fleet of fishermen and seamen. When offered a senior post in return for peace, he refused, capturing a vice-governor and cutting off his ears and nose. Although both rebellions were eventually quashed, their violent obstinance had a seismic impact on the emerging proto-samurai philosophy – raising dangerous questions about the role of the warrior and the nature of loyalty.

In the mid 12th century, as power shifted into the hands of the royal offshoot clans, the Taira and Minamoto, the nature of loyalty became increasingly complicated. When the Taira-backed emperor went to war with his brother, Minamoto no Yoshitomo sided with the emperor, against his own father. However, when ordered to execute his father, Yoshitomo refused. Instead he left the task to one of his officers, who later committed suicide in shame.

Decades later, yet another Minamoto clan member broke out in revolt, this time triggering a wider civil war. Although recently retired 74-year-old poet Minamoto no Yorimasa had previously sided with the Taira, when the Taira leader's son stole Yorimasa's son's horse – and mockingly named it after him – honour dictated that he seek vengeance. Joined by just a few hundred followers, he mounted a suicidal last stand at the Battle of Uji, where, as his men held the attackers back, Yorimasa calmly knelt down and wrote a final poem on his fan: "Like a fossil tree from which we gather no flowers, sad has been my life, no fruit to produce." With that, he calmly removed his dagger and carved open his own belly; ordering his men to cut off his head and throw it in the river, denying the enemy a coveted trophy.

Thus the tone was set. Although the subsequent Genpei War only lasted five years, it dragged the entire realm into a great bloodletting of violence, creating a crucible in which the emerging warrior class known as the samurai finally formed a unique identity of their own. The victorious Minamoto not only wiped out the Taira but relegated the emperor to a figurehead, establishing a new order, known as the bakufu, or 'tent government'. Henceforth, the ruling clan leader would serve as a military dictator known as shogun, who presided over a new feudal system, splintered into a network of provincial lords, clans and vassals. The samurai were now the ruling class in an intricate hierarchy in which loyalty to one's feudal lord was paramount.

However, one of the shogun's first acts was to betray his half-brother, the hero Minamoto no Yoshitsune. Yoshitsune's most-trusted general, Benkei, single-handedly staved off the attackers, buying his master enough time to kill his own family before committing seppuku,

"THESE MASTERLESS SAMURAI FOUND THEMSELVES UNEMPLOYED, DESPERATELY SEARCHING FOR WORK OR FOOD"

declaring it more noble to die by his own hand than by that of an obscure soldier. Yoshitsune stabbed himself under his left nipple, "stretched the incision in three directions" and ripped out his intestines. Japan's quintessential samurai, his death raised the bar for all future acts of seppuku.

One can scarcely imagine the willpower, or ideology, that would drive a sane man to leave the world in so gruesome a manner, and to violate every war-hardened survival instinct. Like his fellow Genpei War samurai, Yoshitsune's philosophy brought together elements of the indigenous Shinto faith with Buddhist and Confucian values; such as accepting one's lot in life, and duty to one's superiors. The warriors infused these values and teachings with a deeply martial mentality, which saw death not as an end, but as a transition. From childhood, they were raised to devote themselves entirely to the principles of loyalty, honour and courage.

In a world where loyalty to one's master was the most defining role of one's life, the loss of a lord was tantamount to spiritual death. After the death of Kiso no Yoshinaka, one of his followers clenched a sword between his teeth and jumped headfirst from his horse onto the frozen ground below. When the ruling Hōjō clan were defeated in a civil war in 1333, the leader Hōjō Nakatoki gathered 500 of his warriors and apologised for being unable to repay their loyalty – "I shall kill myself for your sakes, requiting in death the favours received in life" – before committing seppuku. Alongside the Hōjō leadership, around 6,000 clansmen followed suit in an act of mass honour suicide.

In 1441, when Akamatsu Mitsusuke was attacked with a huge force for murdering the shogun, rather than fight a losing battle, his men committed mass suicide. One of them, Asaka, jumped down from a tower, butchered numerous enemies, climbed back up and roared: "Weaklings, watch me cut my stomach and I will show you how it is done!" He then maniacally hurled his guts over the enemy, set fire to his lord's room, slit his throat and crawled onto his master's corpse to die.

When the Samurai were not ripping out their guts, they embraced the finer pleasures of high culture. While poetry had always been a celebrated pursuit, even the gruff Hideyoshi could appreciate Sen Rikyu's mastery of the Zen Buddhism-inspired tea ceremony – making him the tea master of Japan, before ordering him to commit suicide in a fit of paranoia. While many of Buddhism's major tenets may have long been lost to the ultraviolence of samurai society, the tea ceremony offered grizzled samurai a rare opportunity to bask in peace. Sen Rikyū elevated the tea ceremony to a process where the tea-preparation ritual was in many ways more important than the act of drinking it – drawing one's attention to the impermanence of life, while rejecting shallow materialism and appreciating the beauty in the pedestrian aspects of life.

Such pleasantries became all the more important when Tokugawa Ieyasu brought peace to the realm, ushering in a sweeping set of social reforms designed to kick out the ladder that he had climbed to reach the top of the pecking order. Building on Hideyoshi's social policies, he oversaw a series of increasingly pervasive reforms that segregated the four classes of citizen – peasants, artisans, merchants and samurai – more than ever. Peasants were forbidden from leaving their villages,

Before going into a particularly risky battle, or committing suicide, more literate samurai might write a death poem

Between bloody bouts of death and chaos on the battlefield, samurai elites took great pleasure in the philosophical stillness of the Zen-inspired tea ceremony

The ritual act of suicide by belly-cutting, known as seppuku, offered disgraced warriors an opportunity to cleanse their shame through an honourable death

and samurai were confined to their appointed castle cities.

In this time of peace, the samurai underwent somewhat of an existential crisis. Just years before, they had been the vanguard of a system of perpetual warfare; now they had been reduced to bureaucrats and administrators. The Tokugawa's strict caps on local retinue sizes also forced many lords to lay off huge numbers of soldiers. These masterless samurai, known as rōnin, found themselves unemployed, desperately searching for work or food.

Among the most famous rōnin was a martial arts instructor named Musashi Miyamoto, who was said to have never lost a duel. Miyamoto was also a writer, and penned a seminal work, *The Book of Five Rings*, celebrating the techniques and ideals of the warrior code, which writers were now beginning to refer to as bushidō, or 'The Way of the Warrior'.

Miyamoto wrote: "The martial way of life practised by warriors is based on excelling others in anything and everything. Whether by victory in an individual duel or by winning a battle with several people, one thinks of serving the interests of one's employer, of serving one's own interests, of becoming well known and socially established."

In reality, the word 'samurai' literally translated to 'one who serves', and there was little meaning in being a servant without a master. While some rōnin went on to become bandits and brigands, others sold off their swords and became merchants, physicians or priests instead. Many could not handle the tumble from grace and had no choice but to commit suicide with dignity. In fact, mass suicides became so endemic that by 1663 the Tokugawa had to outlaw it, seeing it as a serious drain of labour and experience. Reflecting the mood of the time, the samurai-turned-monk Yamamoto Tsunetomo explained: "The way of the samurai is found in death."

For the samurai who remained employed, their class entitled them to a series of exclusive privileges. They were not only allowed to bear arms, but had the right to cut down any commoner who disrespected them. However, this status was a double-edged sword, for the samurai were held to far higher moral standards than the lower classes. Any soldiers caught gambling were exiled from the capital, and a samurai who killed their parent would be dragged through the streets and crucified.

The most shameful punishment reserved for the most dishonourable samurai was a public beheading. For lesser offenses, those condemned to death were offered the opportunity to commit seppuku. The most valiant of victims would embrace this with defiance by making a second gruesome cut, carving an agonising X-shaped wound across their abdomen.

However, under the Tokugawa, the act was reduced to a shell of its former self; a metaphorical reflection on the hollow nature of bushidō in an age of peace. One's suffering was usually cut short by a second person who, after the initial cut, would decapitate the samurai, ending their misery. Some petty nobles might only be handed a symbolic wooden sword, or a fan, and have their heads cut off as soon as they reached out for it.

In one particularly telling case, after being mocked by a drunken group of footsoldiers, a young samurai called Suga Kozaemon killed six of them, before wounding several more and tying them to a boat. The authorities forced the surviving warriors to commit seppuku for being so thoroughly disgraced, while allowing Kozaemon to commit suicide in honour of his martial ability.

After the Meiji government crushed the Satsuma Rebellion, wiping out the samurai class, the rebel leader Saigō Takamori

LEFT A samurai commits seppuku in battle

ABOVE Yoshitoshi Tsukioka created a series of wood-block prints based on the gruesome sights he saw during the Meiji Restoration, such as this act of honour suicide

was said to have committed seppuku, the great swansong of the samurai. Some even speculated that his head flew off into the heavens, landing on Mars, or that he died attaining Nirvana, circled by weeping disciples. In truth, Takamori may have been felled by a bullet. Either way, although the samurai were gone, the code of bushidō lived on.

Upon creating a new conscript army in 1871, Japan's Ministry of War issued a set of instructions, listing seven martial ideals required from each soldier: loyalty, decorum, faith, obedience, courage, frugality and honour. It explained, "This spirit made up the substance of the bushidō of old."

In the subsequent decades, as Japan desperately attempted to modernise, this new form of bushidō grew increasingly important. Military victories over China and Russia only further fuelled its conceptual role in the country's cultural homogenisation. As World War II drew nearer, politicians revived a bastardised form of bushidō to drum up ultranationalist militant fervour among the country's youth. Historian Arthur Swinson says that even though the samurai system had been abolished for 74 years by the time of Pearl Harbor, the bushidō code lived on: "The fact that the code was not incorporated into Army Regulations did not invalidate it, for it existed on a superior plane – an ideal, a faith, a creed, and a key to the ultimate things of life and death."

As a living god, the emperor served as a hyper-concentrated focal point of the Japanese spirit, to whom the Japanese must remain loyal unto death. This force manifested itself in a tidal wave of ultraviolence, driving the Japanese army to commit unspeakable atrocities across China and southeast Asia. Like the days of the Pirate King Sumitomo, violence became a purifying expression of the Japanese spirit. In time, even a shallow, propagandised image of the samurai was incorporated into this death cult.

Vice-Admiral Ōnishi used this idea of the 'samurai spirit' to indoctrinate young kamikaze pilots, who were trained to launch suicide attacks, flying into enemy naval vessels. Some young men wept tears of joy at the prospect of performing these suicide attacks. As the war turned and the Allies closed in on Japan itself, the imperial army only became more frenzied. At Saipan, the Americans were on the receiving end of a 'banzai' charge, where waves of suicidal Japanese infantry charged at the enemy.

Things only escalated when the Japanese prime minister announced that every citizen should be prepared to die rather than face defeat. In Okinawa, civilians leapt from the cliffs with their children to evade capture, and scores of his generals performed seppuku. Local resident Kinjo Shigeaki recalled the Japanese army gathering his 700 to 800 fellow villagers, compelling them to yell "Banzai!" or "Long life (to the emperor)!" three times – an unspoken indication they must commit mass suicide.

Men were handed grenades, clubs and scythes to kill their own families and themselves. After killing their mother and younger siblings, Shigeaki and his brother decided to die in a suicide attack against the American soldiers. Shigeaki recalls, "However, the first person we met was not an American but a Japanese soldier. We were shocked and wondered why he was still alive when we had been told to kill each other. Why was it that only the locals had to commit suicide while Japanese soldiers were allowed to survive? We felt betrayed. After the war, I coined the phrase, 'Gunsei, Minshi,' which means 'the army survives, the people die'."

"MEN WERE HANDED GRENADES, CLUBS AND SCYTHES TO KILL THEIR OWN FAMILIES AND THEMSELVES"

This mentality also manifested itself in Japan's dogged refusal to surrender – even after the first atom bomb was dropped over Hiroshima. After the war, although Hirohito remained emperor, he was forced to renounce his divinity and sovereignty.

In 1970, one of the country's most acclaimed writers, Yukio Mishima, barricaded himself inside the headquarters of Japan's Self-Defence Force. After a lengthy speech denouncing the country's post-war military decline and constitution, in full view of heckling troops, he committed seppuku with a dagger, with his followers cutting off his head as his guts spilled out. It was a last desperate gasp of the samurai, roaring out in one final act of defiance. However, Japan had moved on – the country had seen enough death and war and this was the time for life and peace.

LEFT In 1970, after hijacking the Self-Defence Force headquarters and delivering a lengthy speech denouncing Japan's post-WWII military decline, acclaimed author Yukio Mishima committed seppuku

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HANS HOLBEIN

MORE THAN A TUDOR ARTIST

The favourite painter of Henry VIII was a wonder in his time and gave us a time capsule to the 16th century

Written by Franny Moyle

Even if you don't know much about Hans Holbein the Younger, the 16th century German artist who spent the second half of his career as Henry VIII's court painter, you are likely to know his portraits of the king. That imposing figure of the monarch: his legs spread wide, his shoulders broadened by the huge fur collar he wears, his hands resting on his hip and dagger, and his gaze trained directly on the viewer. It's an image of supreme power that has defined Henry for the last 500 years and has graced the cover of just about every book about the Tudor period, from the Ladybird books of yesteryear to the most recent biographies of England's endlessly fascinating king.

However, Holbein was far more than the king's portraitist. One of the finest painters in the history of art, his reputation was built on his ability to draw and paint people with such convincing verisimilitude that it was as if they were almost alive. In today's post-photographic era the experience of seeing a carbon copy of someone seems less impressive, but in the 16th century this was considered a wonder. His portraits would have been seen as exceptional novelties with a mesmerising effect. But portraiture was by no means Holbein's sole output. Before he came to England in 1526 he had secured a reputation as a master of devotional religious works, large-scale mural painting and much more.

Few documentary records regarding Holbein's life exist, but there is some evidence that he was a recognised child prodigy. He was born in 1497 in Augsburg, Germany, the son of esteemed painter Hans Holbein the Elder, much of whose work hangs today in that city's museum of art, the Staatsgalerie. In two religious works, painted in 1502 and 1504 respectively, the older Holbein smuggled a portrait of his young son Hans into the narrative. In both, the composition draws particular attention to the juvenile Holbein and this may well suggest that Hans Holbein the Younger was celebrated as a local wonder from an early age.

Certainly by the time he was in his late teens Holbein had moved to Basel in Switzerland and had embarked on a celebrated career. It was here in 1521 that he created one of the most astonishing devotional images ever painted: *Dead Christ in the Tomb*.

Christ is painted full-size, dead and emaciated, flat on his back in an open catacomb similar to those used in ancient Rome. The lime-wood Holbein has painted on has been cut into a shallow rectangle, the same length and height of the ▶

EXPERT BIO

FRANNY MOYLE

Franny Moyle is the author of several works of history, including *Constance: The Tragic and Scandalous Life of Mrs Oscar Wilde* and *Desperate Romantics: The Private Lives of the Pre-Raphaelites*, which was adapted into a BBC drama. Her latest book on Hans Holbein is available now.

© Alamy

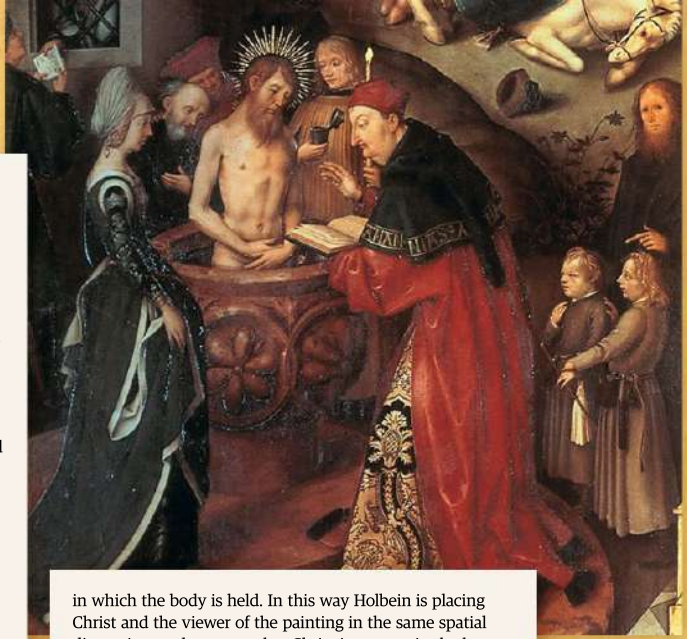
imagined space containing the Messiah. Christ's body is viewed side on, his rib cage just centimetres from the roof of his grave. His head lolls to one side to reveal a gaping hollow mouth. His eyes, partially open, are unseeing.

In his painting of Christ Holbein takes verisimilitude in religious art to a new level. The full-size figure is just the first indicator that the artist intends this work to be as convincing as possible, an illusion that could, for an instant, be taken for the real thing.

The legend is that to best give a sense of Christ post-mortem Holbein drew from a corpse he found in the Rhine. Christ's hair is painted with astonishing detail, individual strands clearly visible. This minute observation is continued around the eyes, where each single eyelash is noted. The parted lips are desiccated and swollen, the gums and teeth exposed. There is bruising on the side of the face. The anatomy and musculature of the body are persuasive. Here are the thin remnants of a man who has been starved during crucifixion, the sinews and muscles perished, his ribs visible, the skin suffering from that strange sagging that death brings when blood stops pumping.

Painting of such virtuoso realism was an exhilarating rarity at this time, and the impact of *Dead Christ* would have been considerable. Not least because Holbein also added perspectival trompe l'oeil to give the illusion that parts of Christ's body were overhanging the catacomb. Christ's right hand marks the niche's boundary, his bent fourth and fifth fingers protruding beyond it. The heel of Christ's right foot lies on the very edge of the recess, the foot and toes therefore also extending beyond the cavity in which the body is held. In this way Holbein is placing Christ and the viewer of the painting in the same spatial dimension, and suggests that Christ is present in the here and now. As such he becomes a 'memento mori' reminding the viewer of his or her own inevitable death as well as Christ's actual suffering.

With one final flourish of genius, Holbein goes further. The original title of the painting, *Iesus Nazarus rex Iudaeorum*, is still inscribed on the frame, and is a device used to compress time. For as he or she reads this title, the viewer is taken back to biblical Palestine where Jesus was mockingly crowned 'King of the Jews' and Christianity was yet to be born. In time-shifting the viewer into the past, he or she becomes a witness to Jesus' entombment, a character in a story that will ultimately lead to Christ's Resurrection.



ABOVE Detail from the Basilica of St Paul by Holbein the Elder, which features a young Hans among the figures

© Getty Images

> "*The Ambassadors*... is a map that, decoded, tells you all you need to know about its subjects, their status and the political climate in which they lived"

Paintings such as this should have secured Holbein's career in Germany for the rest of his life. However, the Reformation put paid to that. What began with Lutheranism in 1517 and would ultimately become known as Protestantism led to a wave of iconoclasm across Northern Europe in which religious work, made under the auspices of the Catholic Church, was destroyed. Painters, no matter how talented, found their livelihoods severely compromised. Although Holbein was not solely reliant on religious commissions, the more ascetic Protestant regime affected his other work too. He had become famous for huge trompe l'oeil murals for the homes of wealthy merchants; for providing lavish illustration for books; for ornate decoration of weaponry and jewellery; and, of course, for making magnificent portraits. By 1526 much of this was considered far too indulgent for the newly Protestant residents of Basel, so Holbein sought a new career in what was at this time a Catholic England where

LEFT Holbein did many sketches of royals and the nobility, such as this one, which is possibly of Anne Boleyn

© Alamy

Decoding the Ambassadors

The hidden elements of Holbein's masterpiece

Signs of mortality

Jean de Dinteville on the left has a skull broach on his cap; inscribed on the dagger in his hand is his age, 29 years old, when the painting was done. On the right, Georges de Selve leans on a book with his age, 25, also written on it, reminding us of both their youth and mortality.

Upper shelf

The items on the upper shelf between the figures are a celestial globe, a sundial and other instruments for measuring and tracking events in the sky or measuring time and are concerned with matters of the heavens. However, they are misaligned, suggesting that the heavens are out of sorts.

Lower shelf

On the lower shelf we have a terrestrial globe, a lute, compass, flutes and a hymn book. These are all more earthly instruments, concerned with life on Earth, its enjoyment and how best to live. The lute has a broken string and the hymn book is open to a page traditionally used to call for unification. This all appears to be a reference to the religious schism across Europe.

Hidden skull

The most striking 'hidden' element of the painting is the anamorphic skull placed between their feet that looks flat when viewed from an acute angle on the right side of the piece. Where it was planned to be hung in de Dinteville's home, the skull would have been visible to anyone as they entered the room, an ever-present reminder of death. That you need to look at the painting differently to view it is also a reminder to shift perspectives to better understand the world around you.

Abbey floor

The marble floor is based on the sanctuary of Westminster Abbey that was inspired by the Renaissance concept of the 'Macrocosmic archetype'. This concept maintained that the forces that managed the human body were the same as the universe and that each human contains within them a microcosm of the world around them. It's an idea those in the painting would have known well.

Image source: wikimedia.culturalinstitute

Important Works

Stories behind some of Holbein's greatest pieces

The Body of Christ in the Tomb

Drawing from humanist thinking that was sweeping through Europe, this is Holbein's famous depiction of Christ after crucifixion in the tomb. The wound detail and emaciated look of Christ is deliberately provocative. It's possible Holbein used a real corpse as reference.

Lais of Corinth

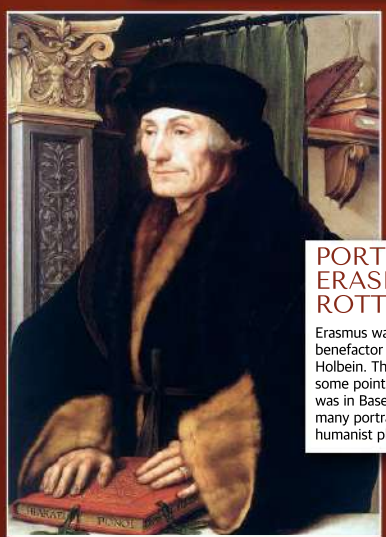
This work has been compared to that of thr Italian Renaissance masters, whose work Holbein was likely to have seen when visiting the French court in 1524. The soft features of Lais, a courtesan of Ancient Greece, point to this.

An Allegory of the Old and New Testaments

Depicting the concept of salvation through faith alone, this painting draws strongly from the new Lutheran school of Christianity and was likely commissioned by a Lutheran. On the left are images of the *Old Testament* and on right images from the *New Testament*.

Noli Me Tangere

The title refers to the words said by Christ to Mary Magdalene after his resurrection: "touch me not". There are many works by other artists depicting a similar scene. This, like Lais, seems to show the influence in this era of artists like Leonardo Da Vinci and Raphael



Portrait of Erasmus of Rotterdam

Erasmus was a huge benefactor and client of Holbein. The two met at some point when Holbein was in Basel and he painted many portraits of the humanist philosopher.

Sx © Alamy

Protestantism was kept at bay and where the appetite for portraiture was strong.

Holbein arrived in London with letters of introduction to Sir Thomas More, one of Henry's senior statesmen. Immediately absorbed into More's household, it was just a matter of weeks before he was working for the court. Despite a brief return to Basel between 1528 and 1532, London became the painter's home for the rest of his life and the place where he made his most famous work. His portraits of Sir Thomas More and Sir Thomas Cromwell have become the defining images of these powerful men and, as they hang opposite one another today in The Frick Collection in New York, their bitter rivalry. Meanwhile Holbein's portraits of Henry VIII, and his wives Jane Seymour and Anne of Cleves, allow us an uncanny sense of intimacy with long-dead royalty.

However it is *The Ambassadors*, Holbein's strange portrait of two French diplomats, that is arguably his most compelling work. As famous for its oddity as for its genius, the huge picture features Jean de Dinteville and Georges de Selve standing at either end of a buffet, on which lie a number of astronomical and astrological items, as well as a lute, a globe and books. There is something awkward about the composition, as if the men have also been 'arranged' around these objects, their direct gaze challenging the onlooker to decipher what this strange painting might possibly mean. Also peculiar is the fact that these two men are together in the first place, in the kind of double portrait normally reserved for a man and his wife. And then of course there is the weird thing that hovers between them. What looks like a baguette slants across the panel in a totally different plane of vision, floating in an imaginary space between the ambassadors and the onlooker. Here is another memento mori, but one that is only understood when one views the painting from the extreme right, at which point the ovoid brown object transforms through anamorphic perspective to reveal itself as a human skull.

ABOVE Holbein also turned his hand to designing jewellery
Image source: wiki/Susan Foister

RIGHT Holbein was sent to Düren to paint a portrait of Anne of Cleves for Henry VIII as he looked for a new wife

2x © Alamy

BELOW Henry VIII depicted in Holbein's workshop

The Ambassadors was intended as a conceit, one that demanded an unusual level of involvement from the viewer. This was more than a portrait per se, it was a discussion point, a debate, or a game that de Dinteville, for whom the painting was made, could initiate when introducing people to the work. In the painting Holbein offers a constellation of references that identify and contextualize his subjects. His painting is in effect a map that, properly decoded, tells you all you need to know about de Dinteville at the moment his likeness was made, his status and the political climate in which he lived.

De Dinteville is on the left, magnificent in a slashed pink satin doublet and sleeves over which he wears a tunic of black velvet, and a silk coat lined with lynx fur. Around his neck is the Order of St Michael, awarded him in 1531. On his cap he sports a fashionable badge bearing the image of a skull - another reminder of human mortality. Contemporaries may well have recognised this outfit as that worn by him to Anne Boleyn's coronation in 1533 in which he played a major role, not only forming part of the

> "He created one of the most astonishing devotional images ever painted: *Dead Christ in the Tomb*"

LEFT Holbein painted many members of the Tudor court, including the French ambassador Charles de Solier

Image source: wiki/Google Cultural Institute

> "Holbein fell prey to a bout of plague in 1543, cutting short a career that promised so much more"

the lower shelf of the buffet. In popular literature of the time this had become an established emblem for diplomacy. Just as a lute with a broken string cannot achieve proper harmony, in political negotiations a pact can be ruined by just one party failing to agree. However, the lute was also a symbol of accord and heavenly harmony, and so here it not only suggests discord but also the balm to soothe it.

As to de Selve, he is shown standing on the right, clad in a floor-length fur-lined damask coat. His age is inscribed on the closed pages of a book on which he leans – he is 25. He serves as a supplementary coordinate to locate the date of the portrait. De Selve was only in England for a few weeks in the spring of 1533, when he joined de Dinteville in sensitive diplomatic negotiations to secure French support for the controversial Boleyn marriage, so the painting reflects this moment. There are more allusions to Henry VIII's second marriage: on the top shelf of the buffet a cylindrical sundial is set to 11 April 11 1533, the date that Henry VIII announced his marriage to Boleyn to his court. Meanwhile the beautiful floor on which the ambassadors stand is based on the 'Cosmati' pavement in Westminster Abbey, on which Boleyn stood to be crowned Queen. The ambassadors' arrangement in the painting, standing as if husband and wife, now makes sense as yet another reference to Henry's marriage to his second queen.

Might Boleyn have commissioned the painting in gratitude to de Dinteville for his crucial role in endorsing her marriage on the international stage? This remains a strong possibility. But above all the painting is a reminder that Holbein's work, carefully observed, remains a portal to understanding past worlds.

The anamorphic skull that is so very prominent in *The Ambassadors* is also a reminder of just how perilous life was in 16th century Europe. War, famine and above all plague were facts of life that not even the most skilled politician could negotiate. Holbein himself fell prey to a bout of plague that descended on London in 1543 and cut short a career that promised so much more.

BELOW This suit of armour was likely a gift from Henry VIII to a French ambassador, decorated by Holbein

Image source: Metropolitan Museum of Art

coronation parade but commissioning the guard of honour of a dozen French men that led it. In his right hand is an ornate dagger, 'engraved' with his age: AET SUAE 29. This reinforces the portrait's date as 1533, since this was de Dinteville's age in this year, when he was the French ambassador in London.

De Dinteville was the Seigneur of Polisy, and his hometown is marked on the globe on the lower shelf of the buffet. There is word play in the misspelling of the place name as 'Policy' – after all what do ambassadors do all day if not deal with just that? The cities of Paris and Lyon are also noted, cities where de Dinteville would have regularly attended the French court.

The globe has been customised by Holbein to emphasise certain characteristics of the world in 1533. Nuremberg is singled out, the intellectual heart of liberal Germany; then Lyon, its French equivalent. The religious divisions of the world are also alluded to in these centres, since both had significant associations with Lutheransim. Meanwhile Rome marks the centre of Catholicism and Jerusalem that of Islamic puissance. Red lines crossing the globe represent the territorial division of the Americas between Spain and Portugal. The international political and religious conflicts of the time are suggested by a book on arithmetic featured just below the globe, held open by a set square at a page dedicated to division.

The role of the ambassador is, of course, to negotiate to achieve resolution and harmony on the world stage. The reference to diplomatic endeavour is continued by Holbein's depiction of a lute with a broken string on

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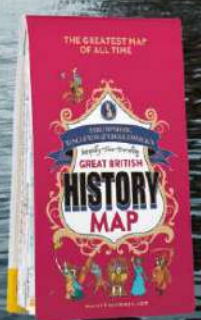

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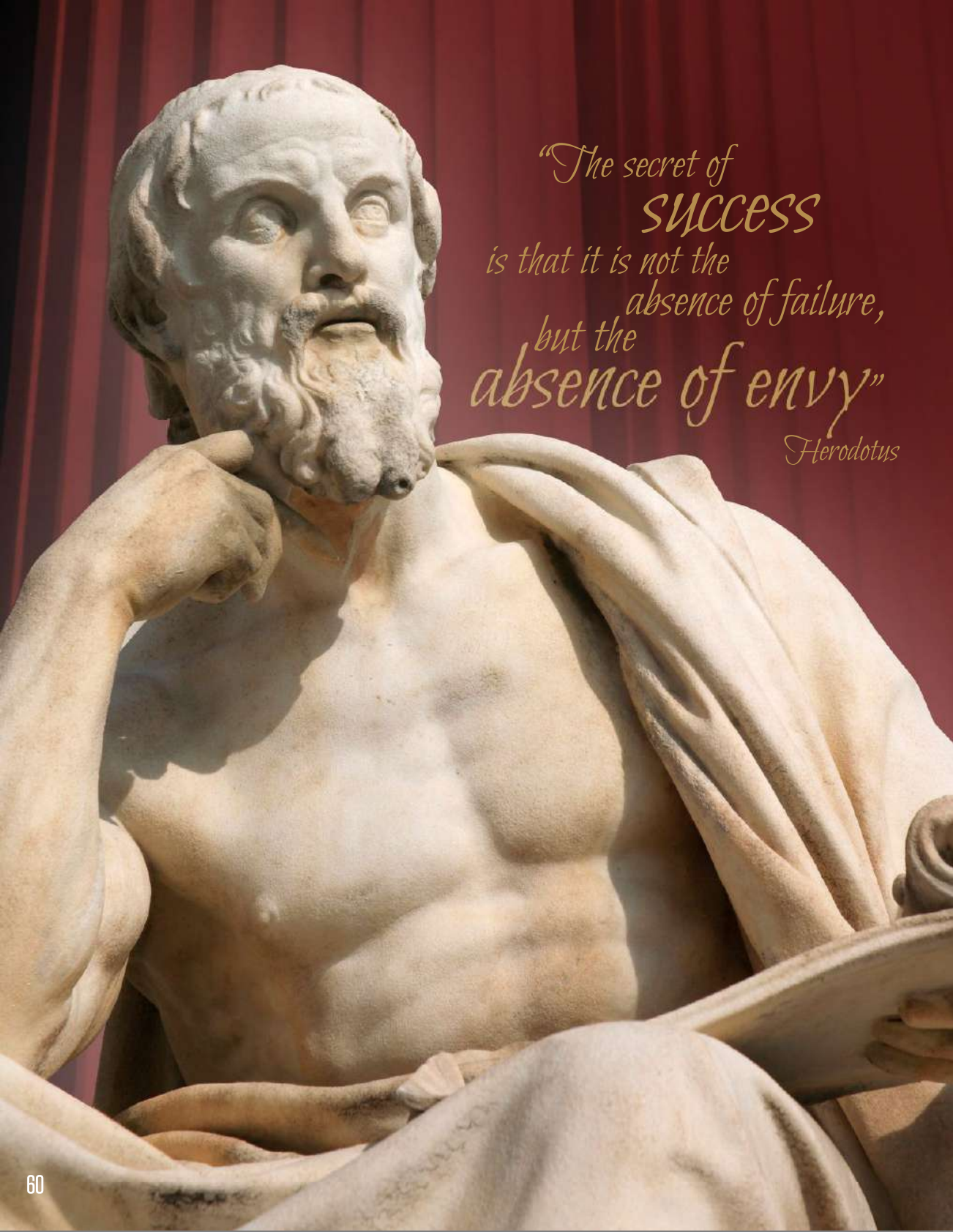
Photo: Eilean Donan castle, Kintail (13th century stronghold, famous film location and perfect pit-stop on the road to Skye)


"The secret of
success
is that it is not the
absence of failure,
but the
absence of envy"
Herodotus

CAN WE TRUST HERODOTUS?

Often considered to be the 'Father of History', many questions remain around the Greek writer's life and work

Written by Marc DeSantis

The ancient Greek historian Herodotus was born around 484 BCE. He was a native of the city of Halicarnassus (modern-day Bodrum) in Caria, a region in southwestern Asia Minor. While little is known about his life, his origins are worth examining for a better understanding of the man and his times.

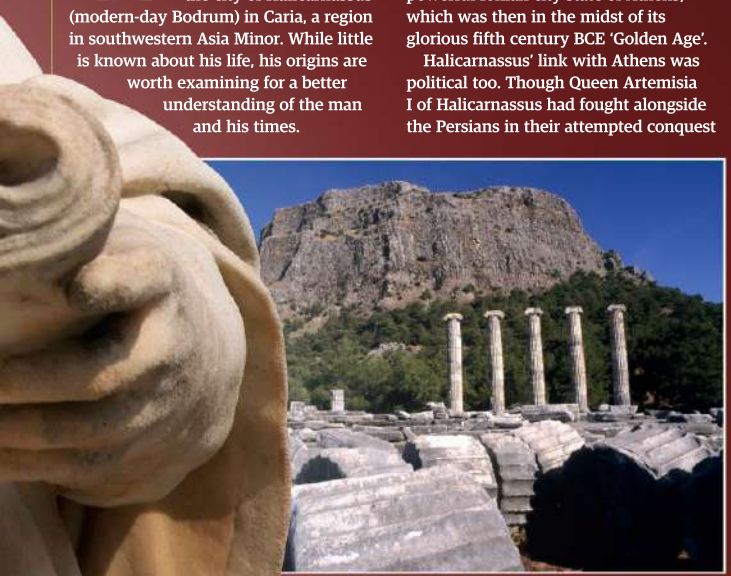
Halicarnassus was originally Dorian Greek, but by Herodotus' day it had acquired an Ionian Greek culture, something it shared with the rich and powerful Ionian city state of Athens, which was then in the midst of its glorious fifth century BCE 'Golden Age'.

Halicarnassus' link with Athens was political too. Though Queen Artemisia I of Halicarnassus had fought alongside the Persians in their attempted conquest of Greece (she had commanded a war galley at Salamis) Halicarnassus would later become a member of both the anti-Persian, Athenian-led League of Delos as well as the more tightly bound successor to it, the so-called Athenian Empire.

A Greek heritage is likely not the whole story behind the ever-inquisitive Herodotus. Caria itself, surrounding Halicarnassus, was non-Greek, and Herodotus may very well have had some Carian ancestry. Christopher Baron, professor of classics at the University of Notre Dame, says that if this was the case, "perhaps this mixed heritage was one of the things that inspired his curiosity about the world."

It would be Herodotus' chief contribution to Western civilisation to produce what is said to be the first proper historical narrative ever written, the *Histories*. He showed an insatiable curiosity to learn about the world around him, and he reported on subjects as varied as the Ionian Revolt and the nomadic Scythian horsemen of the steppes of Eurasia.

The Athenians were so taken with the *Histories* – it is said that Herodotus read it aloud both in Athens and at Olympia – that they gave him three ▶



LEFT The ruins of a temple to Athena in Herodotus' home of Halicarnassus

All images © Alamy

talents (some 320kg) of silver. It was sufficiently well-known in Athens that it was even parodied in 425 BCE by the Athenian playwright Aristophanes in *The Acharnians*.

Herodotus would later make his home at Thurii, a Greek city in southern Italy, and would die there at some time in the 420's BCE

WHY DID HERODOTUS WRITE HIS HISTORIES?

At the very outset of his nine-book *Histories*, Herodotus declares his purpose. He writes that he has undertaken his historia (inquiry) "so that human achievements may not become forgotten in time". In addition, he says that he wants to explain why the Greeks and the Persians went to war with one another. While the massive Persian attack on Greece between 490-479 BCE is indeed his primary subject, he takes his time getting to it, covering many other topics along the way.

The word Herodotus used to describe his work, 'historia', ultimately came to hold the meaning of history as we understand it today. According to Baron, Herodotus, "investigates the causes of past events and offers a narrative of them." However, Baron also points out: "Herodotus was interested in much more than just political and military narrative. He gives lengthy descriptions of the social and religious customs of other peoples ('ethnography'), of man-made 'wonders' (the walls of Babylon, the Pyramids in Egypt), and of the natural world (the causes of the annual flooding of the Nile)."

Brian Fagan, professor of anthropology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, shares this view of Herodotus' wide-ranging interests. In his book *From Stonehenge to Samarkand*, he writes that the *Histories* are, "a mosaic of historical narrative and dozens of well-told stories." Herodotus is, "our tour guide and proxy observer," along the way in a work that is, "part travelogue, part history and myth, and part sheer gossipy storytelling."

Herodotus never claims that he witnessed firsthand any of the great events that he writes about, so all of his information must have been derived from what he learned subsequently. His journeys took him across the known world, and he clearly asked the local people he encountered many questions wherever he went. This is how he obtained the various accounts that he would include in his *Histories*.

CAN HERODOTUS BE TRUSTED?

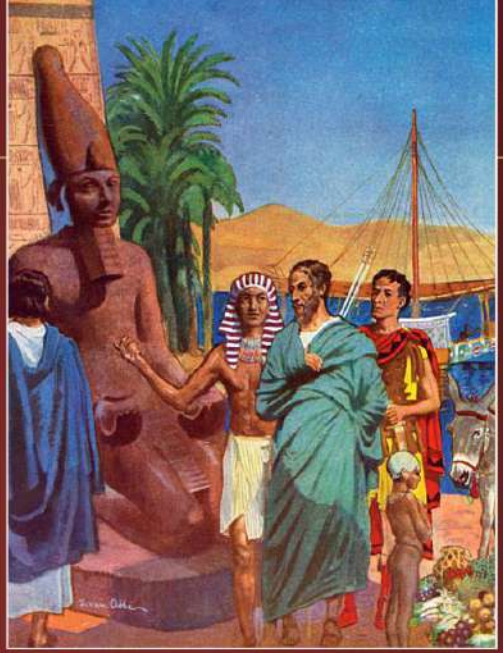
Everyone, it seems, can acquire critics, and Herodotus is no exception. A chief accusation levelled against him is that his reporting is not to be trusted. So how reliable is Herodotus? His methods certainly differed immensely from those practised by historians today, but this is only to be expected given his pioneering role in creating the discipline of history itself. Importantly, he was impartial in his collection of facts and stories and made great efforts to acquire them from disparate sources.

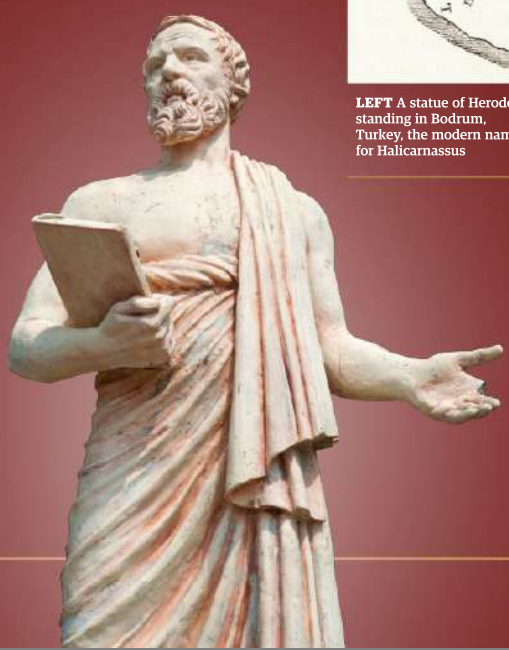
The question is an old one, in any case, and his reliability, or lack thereof, has exercised commentators for centuries. Dissatisfaction with his work had emerged in ancient times. As far back as the first century BCE, the geographer Strabo complained that there is, "much nonsense in Herodotus." And while the first century BCE Roman politician and orator Marcus Tullius Cicero may have famously dubbed Herodotus the, "Father of History," Cicero also said that there were many tall tales in his work.

Later, Plutarch, a Greek historian living in the Roman Empire and writing in the first and second centuries CE, actually went so far as to compose a critical piece entitled *On the Malice of Herodotus*. Plutarch was annoyed that his favoured city of Thebes had come out so poorly in the *Histories*.

It is undeniable that there are inaccuracies in the *Histories*. As Baron points out: "There are plenty of things in Herodotus that we can say pretty certainly are not true, and there are many stories which today we would classify as 'legendary' or mythical." However, this does not make Herodotus a liar. Baron says that, "the notion that Herodotus deliberately told lies is based on a misunderstanding of his approach and objectives. He was interested in the truth, but he also recognised how complicated it could be."

Herodotus did not see it as his place to judge what he had discovered. Instead, he placed the material before his readers, sometimes in several





LEFT A statue of Herodotus standing in Bodrum, Turkey, the modern name for Halicarnassus

TOP Much of the *Histories* came from his travels across the Mediterranean region

ABOVE A map of the world according to Herodotus

competing versions, and left it to them to decide for themselves to either believe or disbelieve. Herodotus himself said: "I am obliged to record the things I am told, but I am certainly not required to believe them." Herodotus' basic honesty, both with himself and with his audience, was to accurately record what he saw and what he was told.

He was also tough and evenhanded in his approach. As Barry Strauss, professor of history and classics at Cornell University, New York, writes in *The Battle of Salamis*: "Herodotus shone on everyone he met the harsh light of a mind without illusions."

HERODOTUS' PLACE IN HISTORY

Many modern readers can find Herodotus off-putting because his work can sometimes seem to meander. "Reading Herodotus requires patience," counsels Baron. "Some readers feel like Herodotus takes too long to 'get to the point'. But most scholars today would agree that those frequent digressions do have a point, in that all that background information helps explain what happened (in addition to being highly entertaining)."

When Herodotus does get around to the meat of his narrative, the Greek and Persian Wars, his account does not fail to fascinate and much of it is immensely dramatic. From the running of the Athenian hoplites at Marathon in 490 BCE to the doomed last stand of the valiant Spartan hoplites at Thermopylae in 480 BCE, Herodotus delivers on the initial promise he made at the beginning of the *Histories*: to record human achievements so that they would not be forgotten. Indeed, they are still remembered today in large part because of his work.

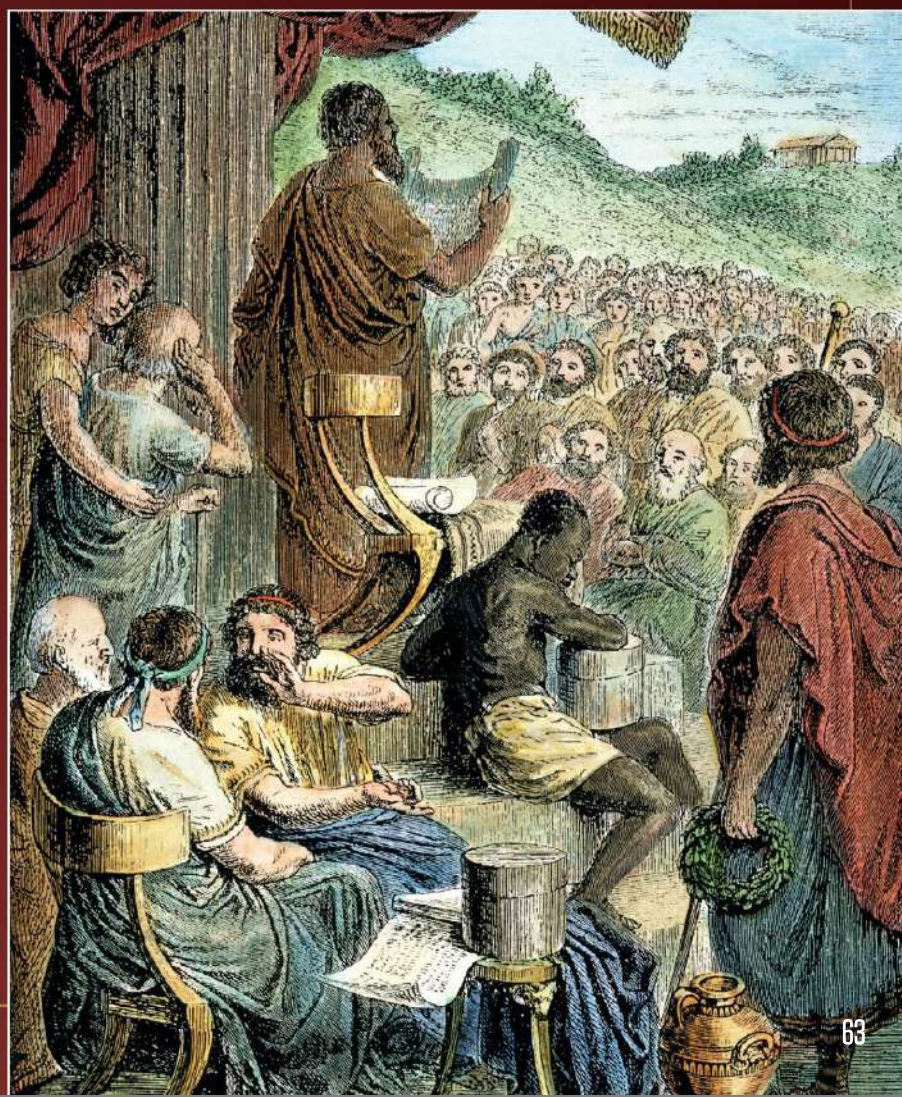
The *Histories* are filled with arresting moments and vignettes. There is the story of the slave sent with a secret message tattooed on his scalp (his hair then allowed to grow back over it to hide it) to advise the Ionian Greeks to rebel against the Persian Empire. And there is the scene right before the decisive naval battle at Salamis in 480 BCE, in which the canny Themistocles threatens to have his Athenians pack up and leave Greece altogether for a new home in Italy if the other Greeks don't agree to stay and fight.

Does Herodotus deserve the acclaim he receives as being the first of all historians? Baron says yes: "Much of this material would not usually be considered 'history' now. But it's also important to remember that there was no genre called 'history' before Herodotus wrote. I think that in setting himself the basic task of explaining and remembering past events, he can fairly be considered the first historian."

Herodotus also provided a model for subsequent Greek and Roman historians, who employed the same encompassing vision of history that he pioneered. They would have no qualms about including information about peoples and geography in their work, just as Herodotus did in the *Histories*.

Baron believes that Herodotus is also very much relevant today in the 21st century: "Herodotus' open-mindedness can still serve as an example for historians (and everyone) today in two ways: his broad view of what 'history' should contain and his willingness to evaluate foreign cultures on their own terms."

> *"In peace, sons bury their fathers. In war, fathers bury their sons"*
>
> Herodotus



BELOW
Herodotus reads his *Histories* to a large crowd of Greeks

Despite a courageous and remarkable attempt by Osman and his men to defend against the Russian attack, it all ended in surrender

© Alamy

Greatest Battles

SIEGE OF PLEVNA

BULGARIA, 20 JULY – 10 DECEMBER 1877

Written by Frank Jastrzembski

The ten-month war between the Russian and Ottoman Empires from April 1877 to March 1878 remains one of the most understudied (and under-appreciated) of the 19th century, despite its political, military, economic and social repercussions. The shifting political boundaries following the war can be linked to inducing revolutionary fervour that led to the brutal murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914. The gruesome reality of how wars would be waged in the 20th century also became painfully apparent during this conflict.

Roughly 285,000 soldiers (Ottoman, Russian, Bulgarian and Romanian) perished during this brief conflict, and thousands more civilian refugees succumbed to starvation, disease, or were murdered. Of the thousands of military fatalities, about 75,000

This painting by Nikolai Dmitrievich Dmitriev-Orenburgsky shows Russian General Mikhail Skobelev leading a charge at Plevna

Image source: art.catalog.ru

men (26 per cent) fell during the savage battles waged outside the small Bulgarian village of Plevna from the summer to winter of 1877.

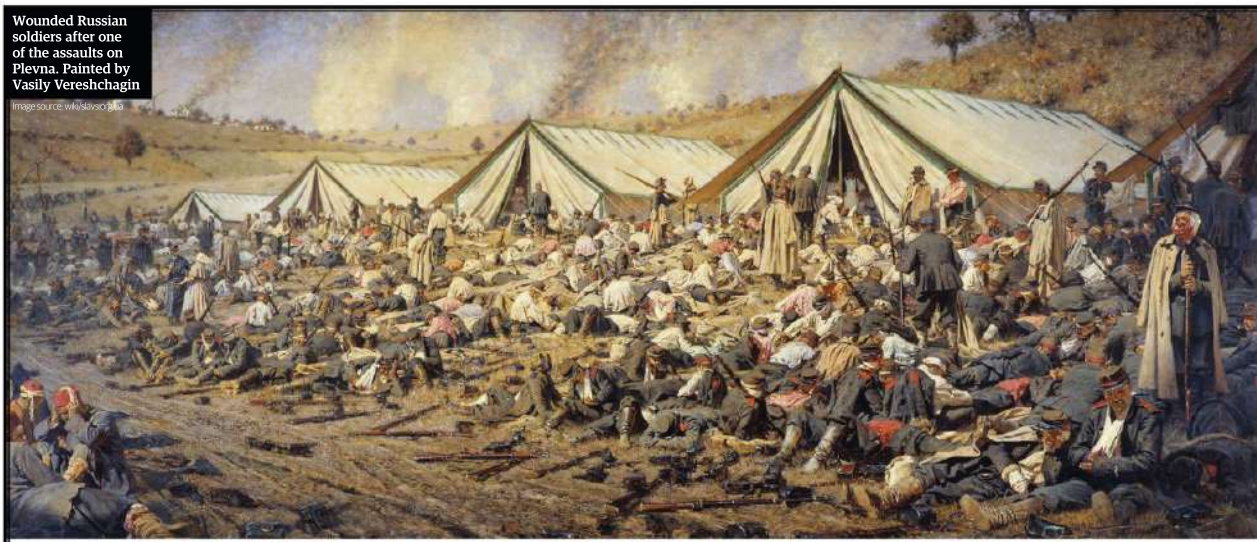
War erupted between the Russians and Ottomans in April 1877. The Russians crossed over Romania's borders, in a stroke 'liberating' it from the Ottoman yoke, and in return Romanians would send thousands of soldiers to fight and die alongside the Russians. The Ottoman commander-in-chief, Abdülkerim Nadir Pasha, with no clear plan or objective, left about 160,000 soldiers strung out along hundreds of kilometres on the banks of the Danube River to counter the anticipated invasion. By July, four Russians corps successfully forded the Danube River at Sistova with little opposition, exploiting the indecisiveness and poor planning of the Ottoman high command.

The Russians entered Ottoman territory with their eyes fixed on the capital of Constantinople to the south, advancing in that direction at an alarming rate. None of the senior Russian commanders could have speculated that one intrepid Ottoman general and his small army would threaten to derail their grand offensive and nearly send them reeling back across the Danube in defeat.

A professionally trained soldier with experience fighting in the Crimean War, the 45-year-old Osman Pasha proved to be one of the Ottoman Empire's most talented generals. If one word described Osman's character, it was persevering.

Stationed with a small army in western Bulgaria at the village of Widin (modern Vidin), Osman grew anxious when word reached him of the Russian passage of the Danube. His flank exposed and position untenable, Osman, in a bold manoeuvre, moved his 11,000 men and 54 guns to counter the Russian columns advancing south. After a six-day forced march tallying over 160 kilometres down filthy roads, with the sun beating down on their faces, the exhausted Ottoman soldiers dragged themselves into the village of Plevna (modern Pleven) on 19 July 1877. Plevna proved to be a tactically significant location because it formed a junction of six major routes. Not giving his weary men a moment of respite, Osman ordered them to immediately begin digging a network of trenches and cutting loopholes in some of the village's buildings in order prepare for an imminent Russian assault.

The next day, a single Russian division appeared on the outskirts of the Ottoman entrenchments



Wounded Russian soldiers after one of the assaults on Plevna. Painted by Vasily Vereshchagin

Image source: wiki/slavsoriga

with orders to scatter Osman's defenders. The commander of the division, General Yuri Schilder-Schuldner, demonstrated his ineptitude when he impudently launched a head-on assault with two separate columns without bothering to make a thorough reconnaissance on Osman's well-entrenched position. Outnumbered and facing Osman's men armed with superior firearms, Schilder-Schuldner's division, made up of 8,600 men and 46 pieces of field artillery, was demolished after suffering a loss of 3,000 men. Osman only suffered the loss of 50 troops.

Fresh from his effortless capture of the Ottoman fortress of Nikopol on 16 July 1877, General Krüdener arrived with the remainder of his IX Corps to support Schilder-Schuldner's broken division. Bringing the combined Russian strength outside the village to 35,000 men and 176 guns, General Krüdener oozed confidence, assured his veterans would easily drive out Osman and his men with the cold steel of their bayonets.

The bayonet became the pillar of Russian strategy following the Crimean War, as an alternative to adopting the world's modern firearms and implementing up-to-date tactics. A significant portion of Osman's men carried a simpler version of the British Martini-Henry, the Peabody-Martini, a fast-loading and fast-firing breech-loading rifle that could hit a target at a distance of 1.6 kilometres and outdistance any standard Russian rifles by hundreds of metres.

The second Russian assault on Plevna commenced on the morning of 30 July 1877, with the landscape draped in a thick fog. Badly needed Ottoman reinforcements had arrived through the mountains from Sofia, bringing Osman's total force to 22,000 men and 58 guns. Despite inflicting 2,000 casualties on the Ottomans, the Russians suffered a staggering 7,300 casualties and made no considerable progress. Osman had beaten back two Russian assaults, inflicting over 10,000 casualties and demoralising the Russian forces.

The successful defence of Plevna provided several major complications for the Russians. Foremost, it threatened Russian supply lines and their line of communication stretching back for many kilometres through Romania and into mainland Russia. Secondly, by holding Plevna, Osman provided a major obstacle to the Russian offensive, and began to absorb thousands of Russian soldiers to extinguish the Ottoman opposition. Thirdly, it jeopardised the success of the Russian offensive thus far, threatening the flanks of Russian forces at Shipka Pass and near Rushchuk, putting any further progress toward Constantinople on hold. Lastly, a delay in capturing Plevna could also be disastrous, the Russians wanting to bring the war to a quick conclusion for financial, military, (before the harsh Bulgarian winter set it), and political reasons (they were fearful of British intervention).

The defence of Plevna also embodied a religious and ideological struggle. The Russians viewed the war as a crusade to liberate their fellow Christian Slavs living in Ottoman territory, and any success by the Muslim empire endangered the notion of Christian providence. When Tsar Alexander II arrived at Plevna in person, the contest to capture the village became a matter of national pride.

Thousands of Russian and Romanian soldiers began to arrive and form a semicircle around Osman's defences in August and September, including the 59-year-old Tsar Alexander II and his cumbersome royal caravan. Even though his brother, the incompetent 46-year-old Grand Duke Nicholas, was the de facto commander-in-chief of the Russian forces in Bulgaria, Alexander II shadowed the advancing army, imitating the legendary Peter the Great. Known for his fierce temper and stubbornness, Alexander II tended to cast an eye over decisions made in the field – to the displeasure of Nicholas.

Only two major Ottoman armies were in the vicinity that could provide viable support to Osman and the Plevna defenders. The German-born Mehmed Ali Pasha's army operating along the Lom river to the east, and Süleyman Pasha's army working to capture the Shipka Pass from the Russians to the south. Unfortunately, both officers passionately hated each other and failed to coordinate their efforts. Mehmed Ali had some minor successes against the Russian army under the Tsar's son, but grew timid, abandoning his offensive. Süleyman bluntly hurled his men against

Osman sported a federal blue jacket with no rank or insignia at Plevna – the Turkish version of General Grant

© Alamy

the Russians dug in on the mountaintops at the Shipka Pass with no success, losing thousands of veterans. For the time being, Osman would have to hold out as long as he could on his own.

The third Russian assault on Plevna commenced on 11 September 1877. For four days, beginning 7 September, a significant portion of the 424 Russian guns pounded the Ottoman defences with 30,000 shells prior to the general assault. The Russians planned to overwhelm the Ottoman defences with a total of 84,000 soldiers in a three-pronged assault, focusing on the Grivitza (right), Radischevo (centre), and Krischin (left) redoubts. The assault on 11 September proved to be a bloody upset. The four-day barrage did little actual damage besides creating a lot of noise, and the Russians stormed the Ottoman trenches and redoubts in their usual blunt and uncoordinated fashion. The rain began on 10 September and continued until 12 September, turning the landscape into a soupy quagmire. The attack on the right at the Grivitza redoubts, largely made up of the Romanians only managed to wrestle Grivitza No 1 from the Ottomans after suffering fearful casualties, while the assault on the centre at the Radischevo redoubts utterly failed.

Despite the setbacks on the centre and right, one Russian general and his division managed to penetrate the Ottoman fortifications through sheer determination in the direction of the Krischin redoubts. The 'White Russian', 34-year-old General Mikhail Skobelev, had the ability to inspire his men to accomplish the impossible. During the storming of the Ottoman trenches, his sword was cut in two and his horse shot dead from underneath him, but Skobelev still gained a foothold on Osman's redoubts with an amalgamation of men from various units. Pinned down, unable to advance, and with 1,800 metres between the captured position and the Russian artillery to the rear, Skobelev pleaded for reinforcements from his corps commander, Lieutenant General PD Zotov.

The Russians, fixed in the captured position with Skobelev, used bayonets, side arms and bare hands to dig an extension of trenches to protect their exposed flank facing the other Ottoman redoubts. Determined to drive off Skobelev, Osman took advantage of the Russian inactivity on the right and centre and reinforced this front with men from other sectors. Skobelev's men beat off repeated Ottoman counterattacks, but reinforcements never came. Skobelev received a hand-delivered note from Zotov ordering him to fall back if his position could not be held with what force he had. Frustrated at the loss of an opportunity and the useless waste of life, Skobelev reluctantly abdicated his foothold and fell back the next day.

A total of 15,000 Russians and Romanians fell on the third assault of Plevna, more than the two previous assaults combined. At this rate of death, the Russian army would be obliterated, so a council of war of the senior Russian generals was held and a unanimous decision made to adopt a new method to capture the stronghold. The hero of the defence

OTTOMAN ARMY

Image source: ras.wiki/A Sumovsky

OSMAN NURI PASHA

Despite being unsuccessful in defending the city of Plevna against the Russians, Osman was still celebrated for his valiant leadership against an overwhelming force. He was awarded the title Gazi, meaning warrior or veteran, as well as the Order of the Medjidie and the Imtiyaz Medal for services to the empire.

Image source: wa/Osman Nuri

EDHEM PASHA

Deputy to Osman Pasha in Plevna, Edhem was a field marshal and leading commander in the Ottoman army. He fought in the Greco-Turkish War 20 years after his involvement in the brutal fighting at Plevna, with particular success at the Battle of Domokos and later in capturing Larissa and Trikala.

RUSSIAN ARMY

Image source: wikiUniversu

ALEXANDER II

Crowned as emperor of Russia in 1855, Alexander II's most significant contribution to his country was the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, but he made a number of other significant reforms. The war with the Ottoman Empire was a rare conflict in a history of largely pacifist foreign policy.

Image source: wikiBritish Library

CAROL I

The Russian war with the Ottoman Empire would see Carol I's Romania gain independence, later seeing him elevated from prince, which was his title from 1866, to king from 1881. He personally led Romanian troops in battle and took command of the Russo/Romanian forces at Plevna.

Image source: wikiBibliothèque nationale de France

MIKHAIL SKOBELEV

Riding into battle on a white horse and dressed in a white uniform, Skobelev was nicknamed the White General and was celebrated for his heroism during the Russo-Turkish War. He was promoted to lieutenant-general during the siege and was present when Osman Pasha surrendered.

JUL-DEC 1877

of Sevastopol during the Crimean War, General Eduard Totleben, was called from his retirement in St Petersburg to oversee the siege of Plevna. Totleben redirected the Russian operations by dedicating his efforts to cutting off Osman and his men from support.

By mid-November, Osman's 50,000 defenders were cut off by at least double the amount of Russian and Romanian soldiers, complemented by hundreds of well-positioned guns. On average, a skirmish or clash was taking place every five days and Osman could no longer replenish his losses on the front line. Disease began to spread, leading to homes, stables and sheds being turned into makeshift hospitals. On 13 November, Grand Duke Nicholas sent a flag of truce to Osman asking for his surrender, but Osman politely refused the offer.

Meanwhile, an Ottoman relief army was thrown together, under the command of Mehmed Ali. It had orders from Abdülhamid II to assemble at Sofia in the west and move through the Arabakonak mountain pass, falling on the rear of the Russian besiegers surrounding Plevna. Made up of some second and third tier Ottoman soldiers, Mehmed Ali's army of 20,000 was quickly halted by a Russian force of 30,000 detached from the siege in order to block his advance.

With no conceivable support coming, Osman had no other choice than to surrender or attempt to break out by December. He chose to go down fighting. He concentrated a significant portion of his remaining manpower to the rear of his defences, hoping to blow a hole in the Russian line.

On 10 December, a massed column of Ottoman soldiers appeared and, with Osman in the lead, they rushed the Russian entrenchments roughly 2.7 kilometres ahead. Thousands of voices chanted Bismillah-ir-Rahmân-ir-Raheem ('In the name of Allah, the most Compassionate, the most Merciful') as Russian rifle fire and artillery shells tore through their tightly packed ranks. The Ottoman soldiers kept driving forward through the deafening cannonade and thick smoke to puncture a hole in the Russian line. Both sides hacked, clubbed and stabbed at each other and fired at point-blank range.

Well-directed Russian artillery fire and fresh reinforcements pinned down Osman's men, while Russian counterattacks from the other sectors overwhelmed the other diminished Ottoman sectors. Even more devastating, Osman went down wounded, pierced in the calf, leading to a rumour among his men that he had been killed, destroying what morale remained.

With no other choice, Osman surrendered. After 143 days, the siege finally fell on the morning of 10 December 1877. The Ottomans lost nearly 6,000 in the attempted breakout, with 1,300 Russian casualties. The remaining Ottoman soldiers who had fought so hard for their sultan were marched off to be imprisoned in Russia. A day after the surrender, Osman was presented to Alexander II as a hero before being taken to Russia as a prisoner.

Dolna Netropolié
Gorna Netropolié
05 Totleben's investment of Plevna
Totleben severs Osman's defenders from the outside aid, capturing key positions in the rear of Plevna, mostly notably at Gorni-Dubnik, Dolni-Dabnik and Telis, forming a perimeter stretching 74 kilometres. This comes with a heavy price: 3,200 men of the elite Russian Imperial Guard fall at Gorni-Dubnik on 24 October.
Blasivota
Dubnitza River
Dolna Dubnik
03 Skobelev's success on the left
Skobelev achieves a foothold on Osman's redoubts on 11 September, holding his position through the night and during the next day. General Zotov professes that reinforcements can't be spared, and with his isolated force diminishing at a fearful rate, Skobelev has no choice but to fall back.
Disevitza
Ternina
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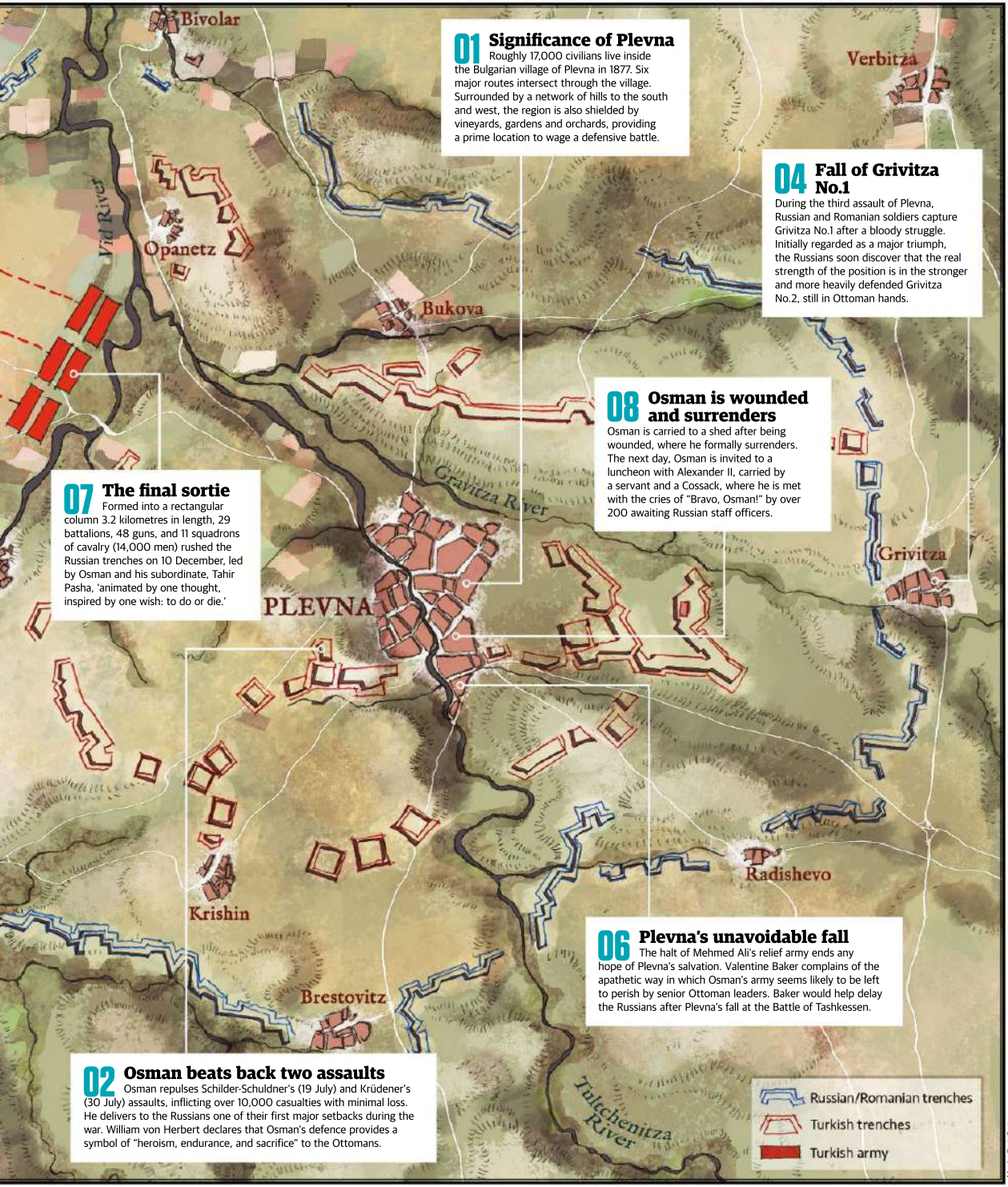

01 Significance of Plevna
Roughly 17,000 civilians live inside the Bulgarian village of Plevna in 1877. Six major routes intersect through the village. Surrounded by a network of hills to the south and west, the region is also shielded by vineyards, gardens and orchards, providing a prime location to wage a defensive battle.

02 Osman beats back two assaults
Osman repulses Schilder-Schuldner's (19 July) and Krüdener's (30 July) assaults, inflicting over 10,000 casualties with minimal loss. He delivers to the Russians one of their first major setbacks during the war. William von Herbert declares that Osman's defence provides a symbol of "heroism, endurance, and sacrifice" to the Ottomans.

04 Fall of Grivitza No.1
During the third assault of Plevna, Russian and Romanian soldiers capture Grivitza No.1 after a bloody struggle. Initially regarded as a major triumph, the Russians soon discover that the real strength of the position is in the stronger and more heavily defended Grivitza No.2, still in Ottoman hands.

06 Plevna's unavoidable fall
The halt of Mehmed Ali's relief army ends any hope of Plevna's salvation. Valentine Baker complains of the apathetic way in which Osman's army seems likely to be left to perish by senior Ottoman leaders. Baker would help delay the Russians after Plevna's fall at the Battle of Tashkessen.

07 The final sortie
Formed into a rectangular column 3.2 kilometres in length, 29 battalions, 48 guns, and 11 squadrons of cavalry (14,000 men) rushed the Russian trenches on 10 December, led by Osman and his subordinate, Tahir Pasha, 'animated by one thought, inspired by one wish: to do or die.'

08 Osman is wounded and surrenders
Osman is carried to a shed after being wounded, where he formally surrenders. The next day, Osman is invited to a luncheon with Alexander II, carried by a servant and a Cossack, where he is met with the cries of "Bravo, Osman!" by over 200 awaiting Russian staff officers.

Map by RoodEspin

What If...

THE RAF LOST THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN?

The possible consequences of Britain's aerial defeat in 1940 have fascinated historians and perplexed military strategists for decades

Interview by Tim Williamson

INTERVIEW WITH

Image source: Andy Saunders

ANDY SAUNDERS

Andy is an author and researcher who specialises in the air war over Europe 1939-45, with a particular interest in the Battle of Britain. He was a founder and the first curator of Tangmere Military Aviation Museum and is a regular TV and film consultant. He currently edits the German military history magazine, *Iron Cross*.

The Battle of Britain was a critical moment in World War II, a tussle that saw the Royal Air Force and other British services stop the German Luftwaffe gaining air superiority over the UK. Since the end of the war many historians have speculated and debated the possible outcomes if the RAF had been defeated in 1940. This usually centres on the idea that a defeat would have been followed by the Nazi invasion of Britain. Operation Sea Lion, as the German invasion plan was called, could have ultimately led to the complete and irremediable defeat of Britain and her vast empire.

However, while the defeat of the RAF might not necessarily have led to invasion (and if it had, such an invasion attempt might well have failed) it would have certainly set in motion a very different series of events for the remainder of the war.

Why was the Battle of Britain such a critical moment for Britain and Nazi Germany?

By the early summer of 1940 Germany had defeated and occupied the majority of Western Europe, while Britain had suffered the ignominious military disaster of defeat in France, Belgium and Norway. Nevertheless, Britain, its empire and the free Allies still stood between Germany and the complete control and domination it desired. To achieve that goal, Germany needed to eliminate Britain as an effective fighting power. Whether it did that through military invasion, or subjugation by other means, was almost an irrelevance. What mattered, if it was to achieve any such aim, was to gain total air superiority. In other words, to defeat the RAF – and, specifically, RAF Fighter Command.

While it might be stretching a point to say that only the RAF stood between invasion and defeat, it was nevertheless a fact that the elimination of the RAF as an effective fighting force was essential if Germany wanted to beat Britain – whether that be by achieving the air superiority necessary for invasion or through bombing Britain into submission through uncontested air attacks.

What was the main reason the RAF was able to stop the Nazis gaining air superiority in 1940?

The most crucial element was the RAF's integrated command and control system. Known colloquially as 'The Dowding System' (after the commander-in-chief of RAF Fighter Command) it incorporated an early warning system through radar and the Observer Corps, allowing commanders to marshal their fighters in a timely fashion and appropriate numbers, and by placing them in the most advantageous tactical position: up-sun, at a higher altitude and aiming to cut off the enemy's approach to target. It did not always work perfectly, but it did

© Getty Images

RIGHT
Photograph taken from within a German bomber showing a Spitfire hit by enemy fire

Main image sources: © Getty Images

THE PAST

1940

RAF VICTORY

By the autumn of 1940 the Luftwaffe campaign against the RAF was beginning to weaken. On 17 September Hitler suspended Operation Sea Lion – the planned invasion of the UK – and 31 October saw the final daylight raid by the Luftwaffe. Although seriously weakened, the RAF had successfully stopped the Germans gaining air superiority over Britain.

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1940-41

THE BLITZ

After it was realised the Luftwaffe had failed to gain air superiority over the UK, the Nazis switched to a focus on nighttime bombing raids. Known simply as the Blitz, for several months German bombers targeted major cities and industrial centres, but also the civilian population. Despite the widespread devastation and loss of life, the British morale remained strong, and the 'Blitz Spirit' of defiant endurance was used in propaganda efforts to maintain support for the war effort.

1942

"REAP THE WHIRLWIND"

Continuing its offensive operations begun during the Battle of Britain, the RAF expanded greatly in the aftermath of 1940 and developed more-effective tactics and technologies to take the fight back to Nazi Germany. In 1942 Arthur 'Bomber' Harris was made Air Marshal of Bomber Command, and began a campaign of strategic area bombing against Germany, stating: "They sowed the wind, and now they are going to reap the whirlwind." One of the first major bombing operations was on the night of 30 May, during which over 1,000 RAF aircraft bombed the city of Cologne, destroying approximately 13,000 buildings.

ABOVE
A newspaper seller next to a board with the latest 'score' of the Battle of Britain

ABOVE-RIGHT
A British soldier guarding a German Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighter plane, which had been intercepted over the English Channel and shot down

allow the RAF's controllers to manage the battle and it thus gave the defenders a great advantage.

What might the Luftwaffe have done differently in the summer of 1940 to defeat the RAF?

Had the Luftwaffe stuck rigidly to its attacks on RAF airfields (particularly fighter bases), and to infrastructure such as the radar stations, then it would have had a much better chance of bringing Fighter Command to its knees. When it moved away from those targets in late August it did so just at a point when the raids were starting to tell. A relentless continuation and focus on those targets would have finally borne fruit.

Shifting the bombing to cities, industrial targets and ports etc, including night bombing raids, was a grave tactical error by the Nazis because the Luftwaffe really needed to knock out the RAF's defensive capability.

BELOW
London's St Paul's Cathedral seen through the smoke after a night of Luftwaffe bombing

If the Luftwaffe had won, would daytime bombing have increased? And what capacity did the Germans have to increase bombing raids?

If the Luftwaffe had been victorious in defeating RAF Fighter Command, then it would have been able to increase daylight bombing operations and range across Britain at will and relatively unhindered, and it would have had capacity to do so. Daylight bombing was far more accurate than bombing by night – as in the Blitz. It would have enabled concentrated targeting to bring about the destruction of infrastructure, warehousing, docks, communications, manufacturing, remaining military targets, food supplies and more. In this manner, Germany might have theoretically secured the defeat of Britain and its neutralisation as a fighting power without any need for a risky cross-Channel invasion.

What impact might an increase in bombing have had on Britain's war effort and morale?

An increase in bombing (in the event of RAF Fighter Command defeat) might have been catastrophic for Britain's continuation with the war if its ability to manufacture or import was sufficiently depleted. However, in such an eventuality as the defeat of the RAF, there would have been no purpose in the Luftwaffe 'terror bombing' the civilian population. The effort would have been militarily and tactically wasted, although public morale may have begun to buckle if it saw or realised that its erstwhile saviours, the RAF, had already been defeated.

That said, the Ministry of Information's Home Security Unit monitored morale in the Blitz, and while the reaction of civilians was variable it was over-arched by grumbles and grievances rather than any doom-laden crumbling of morale. One of the leaders of the organisation monitoring morale wrote: "The British are pragmatic and with a stability of temperament, albeit with a slightly gloomy tinge."

He went on to say that they tended towards self-righteous indignation when things went wrong and had a masochistic delight in, "knowing the worst." He also judged that to the British, "the possibility of defeat is neither imagined, nor imaginable." This, of course, was when Dunkirk had been perceived as 'victorious', the Battle of Britain had been won and the population buoyed-up by the rhetoric of Winston Churchill. All of that may have changed if the British population was truly staring defeat in the face.

ABOVE-MIDDLE
Hawker Hurricanes in formation during 1940

ABOVE
Messerschmitt Bf110 bombers in formation flight

If the RAF had been defeated, was a German invasion or a British surrender more likely?

Even with air superiority wrested from the RAF, it was not a given that invasion would have followed because such an operation was fraught with danger and difficulty – even with Fighter Command out of the way. Part of the problem for Germany was the logistical issue of getting an invasion force across the Channel because it simply did not have either the right vessels or sufficient numbers of them.

Additionally, the Luftwaffe had lost a huge percentage of its Ju 52 transport fleet in Holland and many key naval vessels in Norway, and with the Royal Navy still immensely powerful its Home Fleet would have impeded invasion attempts. However, the Royal Navy's ships would have been very vulnerable to Luftwaffe attack (particularly from the Ju 87 Stuka) without fighter cover from the RAF. Also, and again without fighter cover, Bomber Command would have intervened.

The occupying force would also need to be fed and supplied, and supply lines may have been challenging.

Was it possible the RAF could have been rebuilt to defend Britain?

Had RAF Fighter Command been defeated, and no invasion or occupation of Britain had subsequently occurred, then it might theoretically have been possible to rebuild the fighter force. However, this would have been contingent upon the ability to continue aircraft production in undamaged factories (there was never a shortage of aircraft, only of pilots) or potentially the import of suitable American fighters – although this would all have taken time.

The rebuilding of RAF capability within Britain would also have been reliant upon the supply of raw materials, that the Luftwaffe did not then focus on the destruction of aircraft factories, and that enough pilots could be trained and made operational in good time.

THE POSSIBILITY

1940

LUFTWAFFE SUPERIORITY

With RAF Fighter Command crippled or destroyed, the Luftwaffe would have reigned supreme in British airspace. With no fighter aircraft to pose any threat, Luftwaffe bombers could launch a greater number of bombing raids on Britain's industrial centres and major cities. The benefit of bombing during the daytime would have made these raids far more accurate and therefore devastating for Britain's war industry.

1941

BLITZ SPIRIT BROKEN

In a speech to Parliament after the evacuation of Dunkirk, Winston Churchill was able to rally the morale of the public by drawing great confidence from the RAF's successes against the Luftwaffe. The defeat of the RAF during the summer of 1940 would therefore have come as a shock to many, and certainly a dark moment during a war that so far had seen few if any significant victories for the Allies. The unrestricted bombing of British factories and cities would have had a further impact on public morale, as well as Britain's war industry. Though an invasion of the mainland UK may still not have taken place, Britain's factories and port towns would have been heavily damaged during the bombings, greatly reducing Britain's ability to continue the war.

All images: © Getty Images

Through History

TITAN OF TANKS

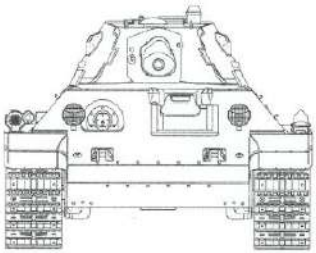
Uncover the history and legend of the Sovet Union's most famous tank, the T-34

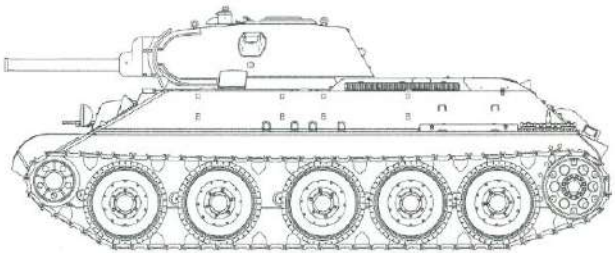
On 23 June 1941, the second day of Operation Barbarossa, the German forces pushing through the Russian border encountered a rather nasty surprise – a new and unheard of Soviet weapon. One German commander wrote: "Half-a-dozen anti-tank guns fire shells at him, which sound like a drum roll. But he drives steadily through our line like an impregnable prehistoric monster..." What he describes and what made short work of the Panzer divisions was a hitherto unknown Soviet tank: the T-34.

The T-34's predecessor was the T-26, a model easily defeated by the Italian and German forces during the Spanish Civil War. The Russian response was to create a type that would be fast, mobile and have a weapon designed to take on enemy fortifications as well as tanks.

Since its initial deployment during the successful Soviet defence of the USSR against the Nazi invasion, the T-34 tank has become something of an icon. Following its formidable performance during World War II it was sold to various Soviet allies (and one even resides in Bermondsey, London). Francis Pulham and Will Kerrs' new book, *T-34 Shock: The Soviet Legend in Pictures* (out now from Fonthill Media) is a comprehensive guide to this battlefield beast, containing numerous photographs and technical specifications.

Main image: © Francis Pulham





RUSSIA'S NAZI KILLER

A technical drawing of the original T-34 design, used against the German invasion of the Soviet Union. Speaking of the Soviet weapon, Panzer commander General Heinz Guderian stated: "Up to this time we had enjoyed tank superiority, but now the situation was reversed."

© Mark Rethoret

PINK PERIL

Affectionately nicknamed 'Stompie', this T-34 was supposedly brought to London for the filming of *Richard III* in 1995. Bought by a London property developer, the tank was placed in a disused lot in Bermondsey, where it can still be seen today.

© Francis Pulham

IMPROVISED DEFENCE

This ruined turret in Israel saw use as a pillbox. In fact, it is a very rare example of a T-34-85 Composite Turret, produced in 1944 in extremely small quantities. This turret features an unusual triangular indent, which separates it from the other models. The purpose of the indent remains a mystery.

© Francis Pulham

TANKS FOR DUMMYS

This wood and canvas structure was designed to look like a T-34 and is one of a number of 'dummy' tanks from WWII. Some were made by the Germans for use in anti-tank training, but the one pictured here was produced by the Soviets in order to confuse German reconnaissance.

© Francis Pulham

63/65 SPAAG

This T-34 features a Type 63/65 anti-aircraft gun. Often considered a Chinese design, it's possible that it may in fact have been a one-off design created by the North Vietnamese Army.

© Francis Pulham

BURN BABY, BURN

This T-34 is shown undergoing burning liquid tests (note the smoke coming from the rear of the vehicle) involving gasoline being poured onto the tank and ignited. These tests were a failure as the liquid made its way into the tank's engine.

© Francis Pulham

T-34 ON TOUR

The T-34 was sold to various world powers following the end of WWII. In 1956, 250 were sold to Egypt for use in the Arab-Israeli conflict. China used the term 'Type 58' to refer to their upgraded versions, which included a second command cupola and machine gun stowage system.

© Francis Pulham

MAKE LOVE NOT WAR

A bizarre sight in an inconspicuous part of Bermondsey (see page 75), the T-34 tank known as Stompie has been repainted by a variety of artists over the years, including this famous scheme by the artist Tee.

© Jaycee Davis

REVIEWS

The books, TV shows and films causing a stir in the history world this month

SIX MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT

A ripping yarn made in the spirit of Hitchcock's thrillers

Certificate: 12 **Director:** Andy Goddard **Cast:** Eddie Izzard, Judi Dench, Carla Juri, Jim Broadbent **Released:** Out now

Andy Goddard's *Six Minutes To Midnight* (2020) harks back to British classics of yesteryear, such as *The 39 Steps* (1935) and *Went The Day Well?* (1942). It wears these influences unabashedly on its sleeve, while sadly never hitting the same glorious heights or mighty strides as either picture made by Alfred Hitchcock or Brazilian journeyman Alberto Cavalcanti, whose Wehrmacht invasion saga, based on a story by author Graham Greene, is one of the best war films ever made.

In a pre-credits sequence, a frightened-looking gentleman (played by Nigel Lindsay) is stalked by a person unknown in the dead of night on an English seaside pier. It isn't too long before the poor chap ends up as fish food. We learn quickly enough that he was a schoolteacher at the Augusta Victoria College, a boarding school for the daughters of Nazi Germany's top brass, located in Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex, open between the years 1932-1938. It seems positively far-fetched such a place existed, but it actually did. As a hook for a spy thriller, it's a damn good one.

In the hands of the screenwriters, speculation surrounding the school (that it was a front for espionage activity), is transformed into a race-against-time plot involving the procurement of an important microfilm and exposing hostile and nefarious activities on English soil. Against a real-life backdrop, propelled by suspense dynamics, the story reminds us how deep cultural ties were between the Brits and the Germans. They were closer than some like to think. Plenty of aristocrats and royals thought Herr Hitler was doing a grand job of things, that his intentions towards the world were entirely harmless. As Judi Dench's stern headmistress explains, why should we be against a man restoring prestige to a great nation?

Among heavyweights such as Jim Broadbent and Judi Dench, Swiss actor Carla Juri is especially worthy of praise for her performance as the soft-spoken Ilse Keller, the school's PE instructor and villainous Nazi spy. That isn't any kind of spoiler, by the way. The film sets out its stall as a game of chess, the characters trying to out-manoeuvre one another. Most are in possession of the full facts, but are unwilling to show their cards until there's no other choice.

Six Minutes To Midnight is an entertaining enough potboiler. What lets it down is a miscast lead (Eddie Izzard) and Goddard's unimaginative approach to the occasional use of action scenes. One chase is so dreadfully conceived that no amount of judicious editing or dramatic scoring arrangements can cover the giant cracks. It's a shame, because a lot about the film works, with the production design, in particular, in ship-shape and Bristol fashion, and the period costumes and sleepy English seaside town locale (ironically, most of it was filmed in Wales) give off a fantastic sense of time and place.

With a few tweaks here and there, a new lead, and some action scenes with pep, and *Six Minutes To Midnight* could have really been top-drawer stuff. Sadly, it falls way below the movies it seeks to echo. ***MC***

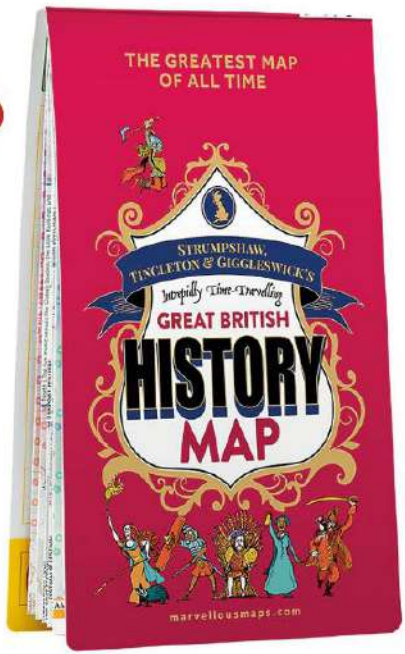
★★★☆☆

Reviews by
Martyn Conterio, Jonathan Gordon, Kiri Elizabeth Thompson, Catherine Curzon

INTREPIDLY TIME-TRAVELLING GREAT BRITISH HISTORY MAP

Your guide to every important historical location you could hope to visit

Publisher Marvellous Maps **Price** £14.99 **Released** Out now

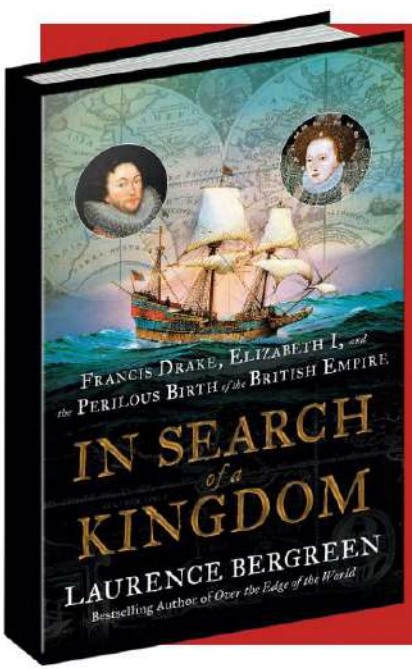


You would be amazed at how much information you can squeeze onto a map. Actually, looking at *Great British History Map*, you might find yourself a little intimidated by the sheer quantity of historical locations it has managed to pinpoint across Britain. This is a fascinating combination of geography and history packaged in such a way that it could be the perfect accompaniment to anyone looking for some interesting places to visit in the coming months.

The variety and scope of the historic locales that this map charts is impressive. There's everything in here from monuments to fighters in the Jacobite Uprising, to the location of the world's first ATM. Spread around the edges of the map are more detailed write-ups of some of Britain's more famous landmarks, such as Sutton Hoo, Hadrian's Wall and Stonehenge. Everything is delivered with an approachable tongue-in-cheek manner, with plenty of puns and wordplay to amuse as well as inform.

But that's just the broad map side of things. Turn the *Great British History Map* over, and you have a mapped-out road trip taking you to 50 of the nation's most famous historical landmarks, from Shetland to Penzance. Whether you want to attempt all 50 in one trip (an ambitious goal) or simply tick them off in batches over time, the map includes some tips and links to websites, suggested podcasts, and all sorts of other handy info that you might find useful. ***JG***

★★★★☆


Francis Drake, Elizabeth I, and the Perilous Birth of the British Empire
IN SEARCH of a KINGDOM
LAURENCE BERGREEN
Bestselling Author of Over the Edge of the World

IN SEARCH OF A KINGDOM

The tale of a pirate who shaped history

Author Laurence Bergreen **Publisher** HarperCollins Publishers
Price £25 **Released** Out Now

Laurence Bergreen's *In Search Of A Kingdom: Francis Drake, Elizabeth I, And The Perilous Birth Of The British Empire*, paints a swashbuckling tale of the exploits of Francis Drake as he set out on a journey to circumnavigate the globe. Its grand sense of adventure grips the reader from the start as you are transported to a time of gold, glory and godly cause.

With extensive research drawn from Francis Drake's own letters and diaries, Bergreen's unfolding of the story almost has you believing he witnessed it first-hand. The narrative is very clearly defined as it follows Drake's journey chronologically, beginning the story from the launching of Drake's expedition from England in 1577. We're given a bird's-eye view of all the unpredictable events of the journey, from treasure hunting in the New World to contending against the Spanish Armada.

However, it is Bergreen's portrayal of his real-life characters that brings this story alive. Drake in particular is given a multidimensional treatment. Bergreen does not shy away from his less than savoury past, including piracy and slave trading.

In Search Of A Kingdom is an immensely stimulating read that leaves you fully immersed in the Elizabethan Age. Despite being a very select moment of history, both history buffs and novices alike will enjoy this book. Packed with high-seas drama that wouldn't be out of place in your favourite childhood tales, this is a read that won't disappoint. ***KET***

★★★★★

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In Elite Forces you will encounter some of the most disciplined and daring soldiers ever to take the field, including Persian Immortals, skulking ninjas, SAS hostage rescuers and the men who inspired Black Hawk Down. In the press and panic of war, few can stand the pressure, but these elite units through history have risen to the challenge.

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HISTORY OF WAR RECOMMENDS...

X-Troop

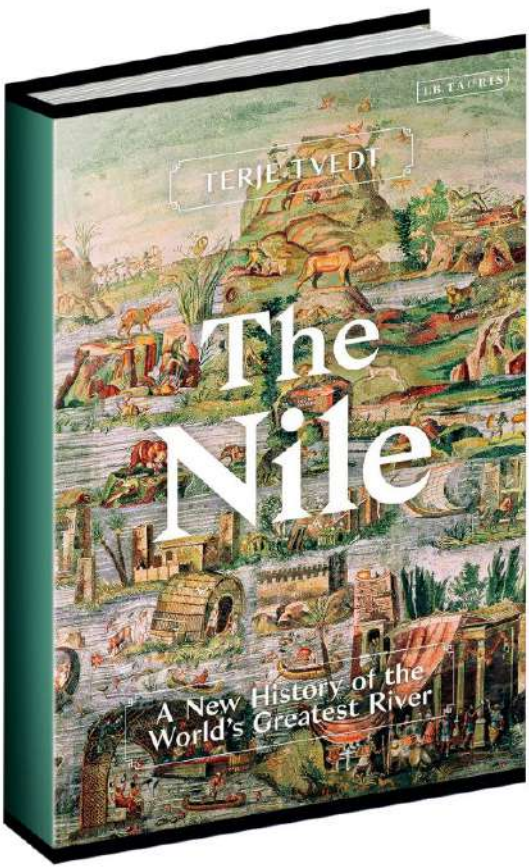
Author Leah Garrett **Price** £20 **Publisher** Chatto & Windus

Leah Garrett tells the inspirational story of a commando unit formed in Britain by Jews who had escaped Nazi persecution in Germany and Austria. The idea to create this force came from Winston Churchill and his chief of staff Lord Mountbatten. "This was exactly the kind of plan that excited Churchill," says Garrett. He is to be commended for bringing to life this little-known tale of extraordinary wartime heroism by this group of Jewish refugees in the service of Britain.

THE NILE: A NEW HISTORY OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST RIVER

A fascinating journey through the history of the river

Author Terje Tvedt **Publisher** IB Tauris **Price** £30 **Released** Out now



"Winds its way through 5,000 years of history and 11 countries, crossing continents as it goes"

Few people have spent more time engaged in the study of the River Nile than Professor Terje Tvedt, and in *The Nile: A New History Of The World's Greatest River*, he continues his quest to document the life and times of this formidable, near-legendary river. The book was a bestseller in Tvedt's native Norway, and it arrives with an English translation, ready to reach a new audience.

The Nile: A New History of the World's Greatest River sees Tvedt take to the waters himself, travelling upstream to find the sources of the Nile. In this involving and richly nuanced narrative, he invites the reader to join him on his journey in a book that is part history, part travelogue, and always involving. The book winds its way through 5,000 years of history and 11 countries, crossing continents as it goes.

It is difficult to imagine a more perfect guide on this journey than Tvedt, who ably steers his readers through the eras, never losing sight of the river that is the star of the story. In this fascinating new work, illustrated throughout with maps and plates, the Nile is more than a waterway or a geographical feature. Instead, it is alive, and it plays a part in the destiny of empires and individuals alike. It is fitting that the journey begins in prehistoric Egypt, a land so inextricably linked with the story of the Nile, and it is equally fitting that it ends in contemporary Italy, at the Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi, a fountain that celebrates the Nile's importance to civilisations both ancient and modern. Just as Professor Tvedt has taken his readers on a long and winding journey through time and geography, so too does the river itself cross cultures, lands and miles, and will continue to do so across the generations yet to come.

The Nile: A New History Of The World's Greatest River is an ambitious project, yet it never loses grip on what could be an unwieldy chronology or overambitious device. Instead, it tells its story with sensitivity and attention to detail, and its rich and vast cast of characters spring to life, whether ancient or modern. From Cleopatra to Churchill, the stories of the river and moments of great historical import are told with verve, while the significance of the Nile in both economic and political matters is made clear. There is also a strong focus on the river in mythology, and the forms that the Nile continues, in many ways, to be the stuff of legend.

This is a very personal journey, and Tvedt's love for his subject is evident on every page. Readers will find much to enjoy here, whether they are students of history, or simply looking for a book that is as accessible as it is ambitious. With a scope as vast as the Nile itself, extensive notes and a comprehensive bibliography, *The Nile: A New History Of The World's Greatest River* is essential reading. **CC**

★★★★★

HISTORY VS HOLLYWOOD

Fact versus fiction on the silver screen

A BRIDGE TOO FAR

Director: Richard Attenborough **Starring:** Dirk Bogarde, Sean Connery, Michael Caine, **Country:** USA/UK **Released:** 1977

This star-studded WWII blockbuster was a big hit in 1977, but does it sacrifice facts for fame?

VERDICT: Largely factually accurate, if a little dull in its execution

01 The film portrays Operation Market Garden, the Allied attempt to break through the German defences in the Netherlands. A colossal failure, one problem was the landing zones being too far from Arnhem Bridge – a misjudgment shown in the film.

02 Early on in the film, General Browning (Dirk Bogarde) ignores warnings of Panzer tanks stationed in Arnhem and places the young officer who warns him, Major Fuller, on sick leave for "rocking the boat". This occurred, though the major's real name was Urquhart.

03 Anthony Hopkins plays Lieutenant Colonel Frost, who becomes stranded at Arnhem. Hopkins uses a hunting horn to rally his troops, something the real Frost also did. He lost the horn in the battle but it was presented to the Airborne Museum in 1997.

04 A key scene depicts a German tank lumbering its way across the Arnhem Bridge. Unfortunately (much to the chagrin of Al Murray as featured in *Watching War Films With My Dad*) the tank is Leopard I, a post-war tank that entered service in 1965.

05 In the film's final scenes Browning says he always suspected they attempted to go "a bridge too far". While this was indeed stated, it was in fact said by Browning to Field Marshal Montgomery before the operation had begun and not at its end.

Main image: © Alamy
Sx inset image source: MGM

Did you know?

In 1960, the tomato soup cake recipe was the first recipe to appear on a soup can label

Ingredients

For the cake:

- 1 can condensed tomato soup
- 220g plain flour
- 200g granulated sugar
- 150g raisins
- 115g chopped walnuts (optional)
- 112g butter
- 1 ½ tbsp baking powder
- 1 ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground cloves
- 1 egg

For the frosting:

- 170g cream cheese
- 250g icing sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla extract

Main image: © Alamy
Inset image: © Getty Images

TOMATO SOUP CAKE

A RETRO FAVOURITE, UNITED STATES, c.1920s – PRESENT

Simple recipes for tomato soup cake first appeared in cookbooks from the 1920s and 1930s, during the Great Depression. Frugality was a key factor with these recipes because certain ingredients, particularly dairy products, were scarce. A cupboard staple with a long shelf-life, cans of condensed tomato soup were ideal because they added moisture to the cake. The Campbell Soup Company developed its first tomato soup cake recipe, in the form of a steamed fruit and nut pudding, in 1940. Due to food rationing, eggless recipes for tomato soup became popular during World War II. Campbell has adapted the recipe several times over the years, with the cake became especially popular across the United States during the 1960s and 1970s.

METHOD

01 Preheat your oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4. Lightly grease a 20cm round cake tin and set aside.

02 In a large bowl, beat together the butter and sugar until creamy and smooth. Add the egg to the mixture and mix well.

03 Next, add the condensed tomato soup (there is no need to dilute it) to the butter mixture and mix well.

04 In a separate bowl, sift in the flour and add the baking powder, nutmeg, cinnamon and cloves. Whisk the dry ingredients together.

05 Add the flour and spice mixture to the wet ingredients and mix until everything is incorporated. Stir in the raisins and chopped walnuts into the mixture until just combined.

06 Pour the mixture into the cake tin, making sure it's evenly distributed. Bake in the oven for 30 minutes – you will know it is fully baked when an inserted cake skewer comes out clean. Allow the cake to cool in the tin.

07 While it cools, make the cream cheese frosting. In a bowl, combine the cream cheese, sugar and vanilla extract until the mixture is smooth.

08 Once the cake has cooled, spread the cream cheese frosting evenly over the top. Serve alongside your hot beverage of choice and enjoy!

NEXT MONTH YOUR GUIDE TO THE REIGN OF TERROR **ON SALE 9 SEPT**

AIRFIX

1:350

TYPE 45 DESTROYER

1:350 A12203

The Royal Navy's destroyer, the Type 45 has the most distinctive design. Her sleekly designed straight edges and superstructure free from clutter is designed to give the ship a low radar cross section – commonly called stealth features. This is reported to give her a radar signal no larger than a fishing boat.

Britain's six Type 45 'Daring class' destroyers are the most advanced escorts the nation has ever built. They are designed to shield a naval task force from air attack by using the Sea Viper missile system. Their Aster missiles can knock targets out of the sky over 70 miles away if required. The Type 45 destroyers are also capable of a range of other roles and will spend their commissions switching between them, often at short notice.

HMS DARING
Type 45 Destroyer, Royal Navy

Length 436mm Width 60mm Pieces 203

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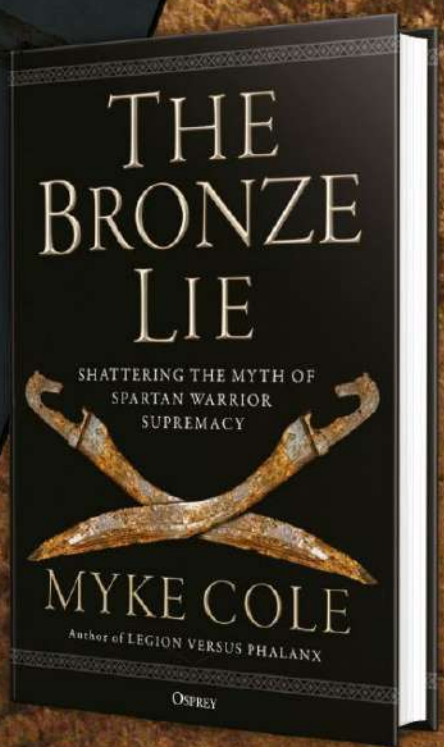
"This book will have a great impact helping people put to right where the 'Spartan Mirage' currently holds sway."

Professor Stephen Hodkinson, Emeritus Professor of Ancient History, University of Nottingham

MYKE COLE

THE BRONZE LIE

SHATTERING THE MYTH OF SPARTAN WARRIOR SUPREMACY



The last stand at Thermopylae made the Spartans legends in their own time, famous for their toughness, stoicism and martial prowess – but was this reputation earned?

Covering Sparta's full classical history, *The Bronze Lie* examines the myth of Spartan warrior supremacy.

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